

Fog filled valleys and terraces make beautifully moody photos.  
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I can go up to a girl selecting tomatoes and start my work.  
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Enjoy our Spring Festival special edition for a delicious, relaxing and fun holiday.  
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# BEIJING TODAY

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Former mayor Liu Qi congratulates his successor Meng Xuenong (left).

Photo by Li Jihui

## City Elects New Mayor

By Xiao Rong

Youthful and well educated are the immediately apparent characteristics of Beijing's newly elected municipal leaders.

At the conclusion of voting last Sunday by the over 700 delegates at the first session of the 12th Beijing People's Congress, Meng Xuenong was named new mayor, along with eight deputy mayors.

There are four new faces among the eight vice mayors, of whom 35-year-old Lu Hao is the youngest. Four previous vice mayors have been re-elected, including Zhai Hongxiang, the only female among the nine.

With an average age of 51, the nine new officials all hold either bachelor's or master's degrees.

"The new government will endeavor to be responsible, transparent, hard-working and

upright," declared Meng at a press conference following Sunday's vote.

When asked what would be his first act after taking up the post, Meng said he would like to guarantee a happy Spring Festival for all Beijing citizens, while paying a visit to those low-income households under governmental aid.

The 53-year-old mayor, who once lived in a *hutong*, also vowed to ensure more families now living in *hutong* areas would be able to move into new houses.

"I have been keeping in touch with my former neighbors in the *hutongs*, and I'm quite familiar with their difficulties," he said.

"The new government will speed up the construction of economically affordable houses to benefit more families."

The mayor attributed his po-

litical achievements to his experience gained working in the Communist Youth League. "My years in the Youth League have laid a solid foundation for my later work, among which the spirit of innovation of young people has had a deep influence on me."

Before his elevation to the mayorship, Meng had served as a vice mayor of Beijing, company leader, laborer and Youth League secretary, winning widely acknowledged respect.

According to Han Demin and Zheng Shusen, who have served as local congress delegates for the past three years, Meng Xuenong is the best qualified mayoral candidate, for both his capability and his modesty.

Lu Hao, the youngest of the new lineup, holds a master's degree and is a graduate of Beijing University, where he studied un-

der renowned economist, Li Ying. He will take charge of the city's industrial sector.

Niu Yucheng, a former Chinese Communist Party committee secretary in Daxing District, is familiar with the city's agricultural sector.

Fan Boyuan served until recently as director of the Beijing Science and Technology Commission.

Sun Anmin is former chairman of the Beijing Federation of Industry and Commerce.

The four newly elected vice mayors reflect an increased emphasis on choosing government leaders with rich experience, strong academic background and a global vision.

Former Beijing mayor, Liu Qi, has taken up his new role as secretary of the municipal committee of the CPC.

By Xiao Rong

China's central bank is issuing three new anti money laundering regulations in an effort to safeguard the country's booming economy against the threat of "dirty" capital flow.

The three regulations, released last week by the People's Bank of China, detail the central bank's supervisory responsibilities and the duties of local and overseas-based financial institutions to combat the growing incidence of money laundering.

Government officials and analysts widely acknowledge that money laundering has been on the rise in China in recent years, following an increase in activities such as embezzling, drug trafficking and smuggling.

Under the three new regulations, which will take effect from March 1, financial institutions are required to create their own anti money laundering mechanisms and report suspicious and certain types of large-sum RMB or foreign exchange transactions to the central bank and the State Administration of Foreign Exchange.

All financial institutions are further required to establish a strict client identity registration system. No services should be provided to clients using pseudonyms or those who request anonymity.

"It's the first time that the central bank has specified the obligation of all financial institutions to keep track of and report suspicious, large-sum transactions, which will greatly strengthen China's anti money laundering campaign," commented Dr. Xu Zhendong of the Institute of International Finance under the Bank of China.

The newly issued regulations will not only help fight crimes connected with money laundering but also strengthen supervision over capital flow, Xu added.

"Anti money laundering will also act as a significant means of combating corruption," said Xu. "Corruption not only necessitates laundering, it also protects money launderers, resulting in the legitimization of proceeds of crimes and the sapping of state assets."

Analysts estimate the ille-

## It Won't Wash

### Central bank sets sights on money laundering

**'One of the most difficult things for foreign banks is to judge the legitimacy of the huge wealth of our clients, some (illegal cash) transactions just cannot be tracked.'**

**The prevalent use of cash in China is cited by some experts as one of the major barriers to tracing and monitoring money flow.**



Photo by Tonystone

gal outflow of foreign exchange from China, or capital flight, has totaled US \$150 billion since 1987, and currently averages \$20 billion annually.

Xu told *Beijing Today* that the central bank set up its anti money laundering and payment transaction supervising departments in July last year.

All domestic financial institutions are required to establish their own anti money laundering departments before the end of January.

Boasting the greatest number of foreign branches, the Bank of China established its anti money laundering system in 2001, the first among China's commercial banks.

"The rich experiences of the Bank of China in its globalized management has led to the emphasis of its anti money laundering work that aims at both supporting the government's anti money laundering campaign and safeguarding the

financial security," said Xu.

*Beijing Today* contacted the China Construction Bank and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, but both declined to reveal details about their anti money laundering systems.

HSBC, one of the foreign banks with the most branches in China, also declined to comment on the newly promulgated regulations, saying it was inconvenient to make any news releases on the eve of issuing its annual financial report.

"HSBC has always put great emphasis on anti money laundering work by improving the awareness of our staff to prevent and identify money laundering activities," said Liu Yan from the HSBC Beijing Branch press office.

A foreign bank chief representative in China, who declined to be named, welcomed the central bank's effort to tackle money laundering, but

pointed out that it was difficult to fully crack down on the crime.

"One of the most difficult things for foreign banks is to judge the legitimacy of the huge wealth of our clients, some (illegal cash) transactions just cannot be tracked," he said.

The prevalent use of cash in China is cited by some experts as one of the major barriers to tracing and monitoring money flow.

"Untraceable cash creates more opportunities for money laundering, so use of credit cards and checks should be encouraged," said Qin Chijiang, deputy secretary general of the China Society of Finance.

"The impact of the new regulations waits to be seen, but at least the central bank has initiated a nationwide anti money laundering campaign," Xu Zhendong said.

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#### What it is

Money laundering refers to the processing of criminal proceeds to disguise their illegal origin, which can enable the criminal to enjoy these profits without jeopardizing their source.

Illegal arms sales, smuggling, embezzlement, bribery and organized crimes, like drug trafficking and prostitution rings, can generate huge profits and create the incentive to "legitimize" the ill-gotten gains through money laundering.

Generally, money launderers tend to seek out areas where there is a low risk of detection due to weak or ineffective programs.

The International Monetary Fund has stated that the aggregate size of money laundering in the world could be somewhere between two and five percent of the world's gross domestic product.

#### How they do it

There are usually three phases for money laundering. In the initial stage, the launderer introduces his illegal profits into the financial system by breaking up large amounts of cash into less conspicuous smaller sums.

In the second stage, the launderer engages in a series of conversions or movements of the funds to distance them from their source. In some instances, the launderer might disguise the transfers as payments for goods or services, thus giving them a legitimate appearance.

Having successfully processed the criminal profits through the first two phases, the launderer then moves them to the third stage in which the funds re-enter the legitimate economy. The launderer might choose to invest the funds into real estate, luxury assets, or business ventures.



# Search Starts for Olympic Song, Slogan

By Hou Mingxin

The Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games of the XXIX Olympiad (BOCOG) is planning to launch a worldwide effort to find a theme song and slogan for the 2008 Olympic Games, said the committee Vice President Jiang Xiaoyu on January 16.

Jiang said 2003 is the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) "year of culture and education", in which BOCOG will participate by launching a series of activities, including the Olympic Arts Festival. During that event, scheduled to be held from June 23 to July 13 in Beijing,

BOCOG will announce the start of its search for a theme song and slogan for the Beijing Games. "BOCOG will welcome works from domestic and overseas contributors", Jiang said. "The theme song and slogan should be outstanding and should also

embody traits of Asian culture." The effort will run for over a year, according to Jiang, to make sure the committee receives a wide range of excellent ideas from which to choose. BOCOG will announce its final decisions after the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens.

## Door Opening to Publication Market

By Hou Mingxin

Foreign investors will be officially allowed access to the domestic book, newspaper and magazine retail markets later this year, said Liu Binjie, deputy director of the General Administration of Press and Publications on Tuesday. Liu said China plans to publish and implement new regulations granting the entry of foreign investment into the retail market on the Chinese mainland during the first quarter of 2003.

"The Administration will officially accept and process applications from foreign investors to enter the retail market once the regulations are implemented," said the deputy director. In 2002, the national government approved the entry of foreign investment in the retail markets of Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Guangzhou, Dalian, Qingdao and five special economic zones in compliance with its WTO commitment to open its retail market for books, newspapers and magazines. In order to uphold its WTO promises, the retail markets of Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, Chongqing, and all provincial capitals on the Chinese mainland will be opened in 2003. Liu said, "China will follow international practice in opening its book, newspaper and magazine retail markets, but will allow no overseas investment in the editing sector." According to its WTO commitments, China should open its entire book, newspaper and magazine wholesale and retail sector during its third year of membership and should also lift all restrictions limiting the number, geographic locations and share-holding rights of foreign-funded distribution ventures.

## Hotel Choices to Expand for Foreigners

By Ema Ma

In the near future, overseas visitors will start showing up in parts of the city formerly all but devoid of foreign faces. "Within this year, every hotel will be allowed to receive foreign guests without restrictions. That will enable foreigners to choose hotels as they like, and even stay in local residents' homes," said Zhang Jiawang, vice commissioner of the Beijing Public Security Bureau (BPSB) during the first session of the twelfth Beijing People's Congress which closed last week. At present, just over fifty hotels in the city are allowed to accommodate foreign tourists. That is partly a result due to stiff BPSB standards for approval, including the required installation of facilities such as safe boxes and video monitoring systems. However, the number of visitors coming to the city has far surpassed the capacity of these hotels, and effectively made the restrictions moot. Last year, three million foreign tourists came to Beijing and that figure is supposed to reach 4.63 million people in 2003 for the Olympic Games. The plan to loosen hotel restrictions also takes into account China's commitments to the WTO, which require all customers from all countries to receive the same services and treatment. The BPSB is working on the construction of a computer network connecting all hotels in Beijing, which will allow the bureau to get information on foreigners' accommodations and movements.

## Visa Paves Way to Easy Cash

By Ema Ma

Credit cards are finally starting to live up their reputation for convenience in China. As of January 10, foreign currency Visa card holders can draw renminbi from automatic teller machines (ATMs) at valid banks around the city. The cards can be used for withdrawals at ATMs at all branches of the Beijing City Commercial Bank, the Bank of China, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China and select foreign banks, according to a Visa announcement made last week. Visa customers will also be able to check their account balances on bilingual ATMs at these banks. The cooperation between Visa and its domestic partner China UnionPay will gradually lead to more ATMs being able to spit out foreign currency. To realize this plan, individual banks' systems will be connected with China UnionPay's foreign bankcard information switch center. China UnionPay is the only financial institution in this country licensed to engage in establishing and operating a nationwide bankcard information switch and interchange network. "We have also begun trial cooperation with MasterCard," said Tong Xiaoqin, a spokeswoman for China UnionPay.



The passenger-cargo ship VISBY, newly built by the Guangzhou Shipyard International Company, rests anchored in the sea near Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, on January 22. The ship, the first of its kind in China, can carry around 1,500 passengers and 300 vehicles at the same time. Xinhua Photo

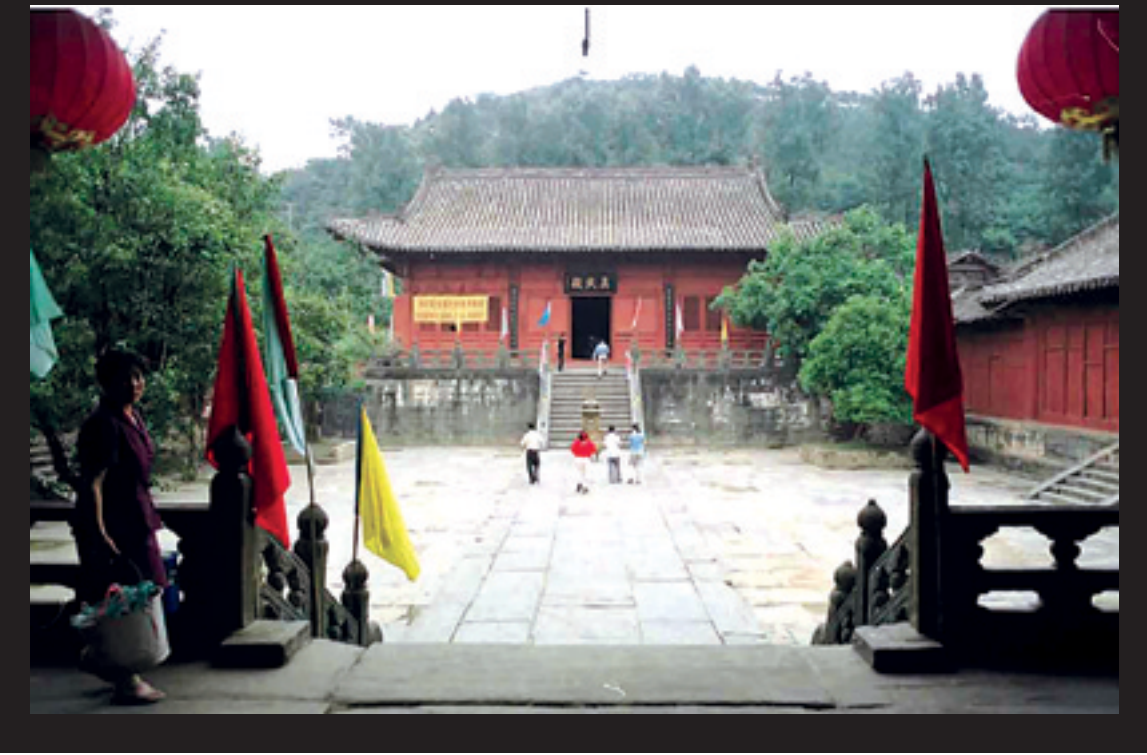


## Temple on Wudang Mountain Meets Fiery End

Destroyed Main Palace of Yüzhen Temple in Wudang Mountains taken on Tuesday (above) and the original appearance (below). In the evening of last Sat-

urday, the Main Palace of Yüzhen Temple, an ancient building complex in Wudang Mountains, burst into flames. Though the fire was put out two hours later, the palace, a

World Cultural Heritage site, had already been reduced to ashes. No casualties were reported. The cause of the fire is still under investigation. (Xinhua Photos)



## State Puts Tags on Wild Animal Products

By Shan Jinliang

As reported in *Beijing Today* on January 10, domestic auction houses have begun refusing to handle trades of wild animal specimens. In a step that may revive interest in animal specimen trade, as of May 1, the State Forestry Administration will begin a trial project of putting special signs on wild animal products indicating they can be legally sold. The move is part of a larger campaign to intensify the pro-

tection of wild animals and the management of related products, according to the Forestry Administration. The project, jointly launched by the Forestry Administration and the General Administration of Industry and Commerce, requires selected companies that produce goods based on wild animals to mark their products with special signs that prove the specimens are legal for transportation and sale during a specified period. Any illegal copying of these signs will be

severely punished. If the trials of this sign project prove successful, the campaign will be promoted nationwide. However, animal protection organizations and some researchers have expressed concern about the move and are pushing for a complete ban on the trade of wild animal products. Zhang Li, an associate professor at Beijing Normal University, said any sale of wild animal specimens will only lead to increased demand and thereby encourage illegal trading.

## Olympic Hotel Set for Auction

By Shan Jinliang

The Bank of China will auction off the three-star Beijing Olympic Hotel on January 29 in order to get rid of what has proven to be a non-performing asset. Situated on Zhongguancun Nandajie, Haidian District, opposite the National Library, the Olympic Hotel has 336 guest rooms of all grades. The hotel was established in 1987 with a loan of 5 billion Japanese yen from the Bank of China and three Japanese banks. Since opening for business in 1989, however, the hotel ran in the red for over ten years. In 1998, the Beijing People's

No.1 Intermediate Court ruled the ownership of the hotel be turned over to the banks that extended the loan. Later that year, the hotel was wholly purchased by the Bank of China. After 2000, the hotel began to earn profits. However, under a national regulation barring state-owned commercial banks from continuing to invest in real estate, the Bank of China found itself unable to direct enough funding to the hotel to realize its full potential. To protect its own interests, the bank decided to auction the hotel. Zhou Songping, deputy gen-

eral manager of Beijing New Century Auctions, which will oversee the auction, said both Chinese and overseas organizations will be welcome to enter the bidding. The reference price for the hotel will be set at 350 million yuan. Zhou added three of the thirty companies that have registered to participate in the auction have already paid the required 10 million yuan deposit. The auction of the Olympic Hotel is just one chapter in a wave of nationwide sales of state-owned and joint venture hotels, half of which have posted losses over the past four years.

## Foreign Enterprises Booming in Capital

By Shan Jinliang

Figures released by the Beijing Municipal Commission of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation on Monday showed that 1,370 new foreign funded enterprises were established in Beijing in 2002. That is a 19.4 percent rise from 2001 and brings the total number of foreign-funded companies operating in the capital to over 9,000. In 2002, Beijing attracted \$2.9 billion in contracted foreign capital, a 3.6 percent increase from 2001. Most of that money went to the manufacturing and tertiary industries. Last year also saw the use of \$5 billion of foreign investment, up 25.3 percent from 2001, of which direct investment accounted for \$1.8 billion, a 1.4 percent rise.

The city approved 818 new representative offices of foreign funded enterprises in 2002. By the end of last December, 8,028 foreign representative offices had been established in Beijing. Tertiary industry attracted \$1.7 billion of foreign capital, the most of any field, which was poured into the 783 newly approved foreign funded projects primarily in the real estate, social service and investment areas. Led by a major investment by Beijing Hyundai Auto, 106 \$10-million-plus manufacturing projects landed in the city last year.

## City Hikes Water Prices

By Hou Mingxin

The Beijing Municipal Government raised the price for water and fees for sewage treatment as of January 20. The move was made to deal with the city's increasingly severe problems of water shortages and excessive waste. The price of water was raised from 2 yuan to 2.3 yuan per cubic meter for urban residents and from 2.9 yuan to 3.2 yuan per cubic meter for enterprises. Moreover, residents now have to pay 0.6 yuan per cubic meter of water used as a sewage treatment fee, an increase of 0.1 yuan. The fee for non-resident consumers has risen from 1 yuan to 1.2 yuan per cubic meter. According to government water officials, this price hike is just one part of the city's plan to improve water conservation and environmental protection. The average amount of water available per capita in Beijing is around 300 cubic meters, one eighth the national average and one thirtieth of the world standard. According to a report published in the *Beijing Morning Post*, from 2000 to 2002, a total of 437 million cubic meters of water was saved in the capital area after the local government launched its water conservation program. That volume of water is equal to four times the capacity of the Miyun Reservoir.

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## Company Info Made Public

By Ema Ma

In a big step towards corporate transparency, as of last Thursday, citizens that so wish will be able to review the credit history of any enterprise registered in Beijing. All it takes to get the records is to present a valid identification card at local Administration Bureaus for Industry and Commerce. Credit reviews should be efficient thanks to automatic enterprise information systems that will be installed in every local bureau. Users will be able to review and get print outs of company files quickly and easily through touch-screen terminals. This will be the first time for the public to be given access to detailed records, such as legal representation and registered capital, from the on-line Enterprise Record Information System on the 505,000 companies operating in Beijing.



# Airport Industrial Zone Thriving

The Beijing Tianzhu Airport Industrial Zone has absorbed nearly US \$2 billion in investment over the past decade, administrative sources announced Wednesday.

Li Yousheng, director of the zone's management committee, said 284 Chinese and foreign enterprises had entered the zone by the end of 2002.

Sixty multinationals, including 20 of the world's top 500 multinational corporations, are among the enterprises that have opened branches in the zone.

One kilometer west of the Capital Airport, the 7.8-square-kilome-

ter industrial zone has developed into a high-tech industrial zone for electronic and telecommunications industries, boasting storage and bonded warehousing, and export-oriented businesses.

The zone registered 16.4 billion yuan (US \$1.98 billion) in sales in

2002, a year-on-year increase of 8.3 percent. Exports from the zone were valued at \$683 million, a rise of 36.38 percent.

The zone's gross domestic product was 2.35 billion yuan (\$284 million) in 2002, 15.8 percent more than the previous year. (Xinhua)



Xinhua Photo

## Ford to Produce New Car in China Annually

Changan Ford, a joint venture between Chongqing Changan Automobile and Ford, will produce at least one new model every year in China from 2003, Ford executive vice-president David Thursfield said in Beijing.

Changan Ford launched its first new model, Fiesta, Saturday in Chongqing. The company's second new model, the Mondeo, will be unveiled in the second half of 2003.

Thursfield said the long-term strategy for a for-

eign company in China was to have totally "made-in-China" products by purchasing, producing and selling here. Changan had many advantages in the domestic market, which enabled the successful cooperation with Ford.

Although Ford was not the earliest arrival to China's auto market, by promoting more new models, increasing service quality and modifying prices, Ford would win more Chinese consumers, he said.

Declaring that he had been impressed by Chi-

na's rapidly growing auto industry on his first visit to the country, Thursfield said economic growth, road construction and industrial regrouping would provide more opportunities for China to become one of the biggest auto producers in the world, predicting China would produce five million cars by 2010.

Founded in April 2001, Changan Ford was established with an investment of US \$49 million from both sides. (Xinhua)

## US Giant Granted First Foreign Insurance Broker License

By Shan Jinliang

Aon China formally took possession of the first insurance brokerage license issued to a foreign company in China at the China Travel Service Plaza on Friday last week.

Chairman and Chief Representative of Aon China, David Liu, described the license as "his baby he had waited for six years."

The joint venture, with China National Cereals, Oils and Foodstuffs Import and Export Corporation (COFCO), will be called Aon-COFCO. Based in Shanghai, it will commence operations by mid-year.

The second largest insurance broker in the world, Aon's entry to the market has attracted nationwide publicity, but Chinese counterparts maintain they are not concerned about the coming of an international competitor.

Liu said that in line with government requirements, the joint venture has registered capital of 30 million yuan, and each side holds a 50 percent stake. "We and COFCO will pour more capital into the company according to its needs," said Liu.

### Aiming big

"The company will mainly deal with major state projects and foreign capital business," said Liu, "such projects as the Three Gorges Dam and nuclear power plants are beyond the capacity of local insurance companies. We can find international companies who can accept the insurance and arrange the reinsurance."

"If everything goes well," said Liu, "the venture will be formally open for business in the middle of this year." The Insurance Regulatory Commission allows all joint ventures



David Liu, Chairman and Chief Representative of Aon China

to prepare for half a year, and the period can be extended for another half a year if necessary.

Aon, with more than 600 branches around the world, is taking a cautious stand in regard to possible competitors. "We will more cooperate with Chinese insurance broker companies than fight with them," Liu told *Beijing Today* on Wednesday.

Wang Jian, assistant general manager of Beijing Jiangtai Insurance, China's largest insurance broker, told *Beijing Today*,

"We will cooperate, but we are not afraid of competition from Aon. Foreign companies need time to localize themselves to get acquainted with the market."

### Growing market

As Liu said, "There are over 3,000 insurance broker companies in London, but only 17 in China. We are just enlarging the cake with Chinese companies; but how the market grows depends on the policies of the Insurance Regulatory Commission." It is a market with great potential in China, and might grow at a speed greater than the economic growth, Liu predicted.

Liu says Aon will recruit staff from college graduates majoring in insurance, Chinese and engineering, rather than poaching employees from domestic insurance companies, expressing the hope that the market would compete in a rational manner.

He added that at least ten more overseas insurance companies were seeking to enter China, including the US-based Marsh, the world's largest insurance brokerage, and Alexander Forbes from South Africa.

## Carlson Wagonlit Enters Business Travel Market

By Alice Jian

One of the world's leading business travel management companies, Carlson Wagonlit Travel, launched a joint venture with China Air Service (CAS), China Travel Management, on Thursday last week.

The multinational is entering the China market via a different route to travel giants like American Express, Rosenbluth and TUI, who formed joint ventures with Chinese travel agencies after being granted licenses from the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA). Carlson Wagonlit obtained its license from the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC).

The new company represents the first corporate travel joint venture in China approved purely on the basis of an outbound air ticketing license, which allows it to issue tickets directly, hence providing maximum transparency of revenue to clients.

Since 1996, Carlson Wagonlit and CAS have clearly focused on the corporate travel market in China. Before the joint venture was founded, CAS had already achieved an annual turnover of US \$40 million from business travel management with the cooperation of Carlson Wagonlit.

Speaking about the new joint venture, Carlson Wagonlit president and CEO Hervé Gourio said, "It is estimated that the business travel mar-

ket of China has a potential of US \$4-5 billion per year. With the joint venture (we) hope to take a market share of 5 percent to 10 percent in the future."

In the past, the authorities in China have only given approval for joint venture licenses to foreign travel firms on the basis of a CNTA license. Such licenses only allow for partnerships with leisure tour agencies and are bound by the rules and regulations of managing inbound and outbound group tour business.

In December 2001, the Civil Aviation Administration advised CAS that they would grant approval for a Sino-foreign joint venture to operate with an outbound ticketing license.

"The key difference between ourselves and other joint ventures is the strength and focus of our partner. Our major competitors have partners who are leisure tour agents looking to diversify into corporate travel. We, however, are unique because of our long-term expertise in the corporate travel market segment," said Gourio.

Carson Wagonlit, with offices in more than 140 countries and annual sales of US \$11 billion, owns 49 percent of the new joint venture, while CAS, the largest International Air Transport Association outbound travel agency in China, holds 51 percent.

## Coca-Cola Beijing Zone Aims at Olympics

By Yang Bin/Xiao Shan

Coca-Cola, the world's biggest soft drink manufacturer, established its Beijing Zone last week, the company's fifth regional headquarters in China.

Song Taishan, general manager of Coca-Cola Beijing told press that the Beijing Zone will have a special Olympic Planning Department, "aimed at targeting the massive market of the 2008 Beijing Olympics".

According to Coca-Cola Beijing, sales of *Afu* branded Coca-Cola (meaning "good fortune" for Spring Festival) are up by 50 percent on the same period last year.

Song said the company's four top selling products, Coca-Cola, Diet Coke, Fanta and Sprite, have grabbed 65 percent of the city market, and that Coca-Cola products will be "available and affordable" everywhere in Beijing by 2008. He added that the overall investment of Coca-Cola in Beijing will reach \$1.1 billion, with 34 bottling plants within three years.

## SK and China Unicom Establish JV

By Shan Jinliang

South Korea's largest telecommunications company, SK Telecom, has signed a framework contract with China Unicom, China's No. 2 telecommunications operator. The deal, signed late last week, paves the way for the establishment of a joint venture on wireless Internet service.

The agreement marks a solid step for SK Telecom to establish the venture since the two signed a memorandum last July, according to SK China's official website.

The joint venture will be the first foreign operator in China's telecom market after WTO entry.

"It is just a big framework," said a senior official of SK Telecom China who requested anonymity, "specific content of the cooperation needs to be clarified." The contract specifies that the venture will be 49 percent owned by SK Telecom and 51 percent by China Unicom, with provision for a third partner to join later.

More investment details will be released by the end of this month. The chairman will be a vice president of China Unicom, and vice chairman from SK Telecom.

Through the joint venture, SK Telecom says it will extend its world-leading wireless Internet business to the Chinese market and hopes to explore the new model in overseas wireless Internet business.

SK Telecom is a subsidiary of petroleum conglomerate SK Group. Chairman of SK Group Tae Won Chey told media when he visited China last December he hoped SK Telecom would not only provide telecom technology, but enter the telecom sector.

However SK Telecom's options for involvement in the sector are limited at present, as China's mobile phone and digital business will not be fully opened until 2006, and the foreign investors are only allowed up to a 49 percent stake.

But the market is still attractive enough for SK Telecom to decide to increase its investment in the market in 2003 by 10 percent. As the largest Code Division Multiple Access (CDMA) service provider in South Korea, with 15 million users, SK Telecom's network will near saturation soon; while as the only CDMA provider in China, China Unicom has ample room to expand, with only seven million CDMA users in 2002 in a country with almost 200 million mobile users.

## Bank of India Opens First China Office

The Bank of India opened its first China office in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, Monday.

Sources with the bank said Tuesday the Shenzhen branch is the Indian bank's 20th foreign office.

Shenzhen was chosen to host the bank's first China office because of the concentration of Indian firms in the city, which currently amount to 60. Another reason is that the bank sees Shenzhen as the best gateway to China's hinterland. (Xinhua)

## NBA.com Launches Chinese Internet Site

By Tony Shaw

NBA.com, the official web site of the US National Basketball Association, and SOHU.com announced recently the launch of NBA.com/china.

The new website features audio, statistics and text content translated by SOHU, which will also host, publish and promote the site in China. NBA.com/china, exclusively in Chinese, will provide fans with extensive NBA coverage throughout the season, along with the NBA All-Star Game, NBA Draft and special events, including off-season trades and breaking news.

Basketball is one of the most popular sports in China, with a following of an estimated 250 million. Currently, seven percent of the average daily traffic to NBA.com comes from China.



# Is OPEC to Lose Control of the Spigot?

London, January 16 (BusinessWeek Online) — For the past three years, OPEC has done a remarkable job of managing output to keep oil prices at around \$25 per barrel, which the cartel thinks is the right price to bring in plenty of revenue without killing off world growth.

But the latest spike to about \$30 per barrel, might not be such good news. The Saudis are now calling for production increases to make up for lost Venezuelan crude and to cool prices before they damage the world economy.

Despite the current concern over prices, crises such as the Venezuela debacle and the US standoff with Iraq have generally worked to OPEC's benefit of late, firming up otherwise soft markets. Political and economic forces are building that could put downward pressure on prices. Analysts say prices could soar to over \$40 per barrel if production in Venezuela, Iraq, and some other gulf states is hit at the same time, and then they could eventually swing back to \$15. The policy of post-Saddam Iraq, Russia's ambitions, and fissures between gulf Arabs and OPEC's poorer members would all play a role.

Take the case of Nigeria and Algeria: both have struck agreements with Western companies

that will lead to an additional 1.5 million bbl. export - a 70% increase over their current quotas. Both are pushing OPEC to boost their production ceilings, which could lead to a clash with the Saudis.

Venezuela, meanwhile, could also turn into an OPEC renegade. Either Chavez or a new regime may want to produce flat-out once the strike is over.

Also, output from non-OPEC producers such as Russia, Kazakhstan, and various West African countries is likely to grow by 1 million bbl.-per-day annually for the next few years, says PFC Energy. That's almost as high as expected growth in world demand.

The Saudis are watching developments closely. Analysts believe Saudi Arabia, along with its counterparts in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates, may open the taps to punish Russia and other producers encroaching on the Saudi market share. Such a move could come when the UN lifts sanctions on Iraq.

"If there is a price war, it will not last for more than a year," says a gulf OPEC official.

"The marginal fields will disappear, and investment in new fields will go down sharply." One way or another, OPEC is entering a tumultuous phase.

(Stanley Reed)

## Media Reports:

## OPEC: Cartel Aims for Reunion, Despite Difficulties

Liu Guishan

January 12, OPEC announced an increase in oil production of 1.5 million barrels per day (bpd), from the previous 23 million bpd to 24.5 million bpd, aiming at easing market nerves under heavy pressure in the past three months from the possible US war against Iraq and the turmoil in Venezuela.

But it's hard to see any positive impact from OPEC's step in curbing the high oil prices in the world market. Oil prices have been hung around \$33 per barrel. Instead, it seems that OPEC's priority is unification of its disparate members.

Since being founded in 1960, OPEC has been struggling to unite its member countries to stabilize the oil price in the world market, both for themselves and consumers. In the first stage, OPEC tried to raise the low prices inherited from the colonial era, and later to stabilize the price. OPEC succeeded in its two oil battles in the early 1970s, which western countries described as an oil crisis.

Since then, OPEC has had a number of difficulties in its unification.

First, due to self-interest, its member countries used to break the production ceilings set by the cartel.

Secondly, a series of events damaged

OPEC's reputation and authority, such as the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s and the Gulf war. Now, Venezuela, the world's fifth largest oil producer and an important defender of OPEC, is experiencing serious domestic turmoil.

Thirdly, non-OPEC oil producers are emerging and taking market share, such as Norway and Russia.

When the cartel held its second summit in Caracas, capital of Venezuela on September 28, 2000, it decided it needed to unify in order to re-assert its control of oil production and the market.

There's no doubt that OPEC's control over the world market has declined. Its share of the world market has declined from a high 70 percent to today's 40 percent.

In the coming few months, there's every possibility that a war against Iraq and continuing turmoil in Venezuela could drive oil prices up to \$40-50 per barrel.

OPEC has said it would gather again in March to discuss the possibility of raising production volumes further.

(Liu Guishan is the senior reporter of Xinhua News Agency stationed in London. Mr. Liu has been monitoring the world oil market for years as part of his work.)



Scott Carson (right), President of Connexion by Boeing and Wolfgang Mayrhuber CEO of Lufthansa talk as they surf the web on laptop computers hooked up to the Internet on Lufthansa flight 418 from Frankfurt to Washington, January 15, 2003.

Reuters Photo

## Lufthansa Launches Internet on Board

Frankfurt, January 15 (traveldailynews.com) — Lufthansa is equipping all its 55 airport lounges worldwide with Internet access in conjunction with its partner Vodafone D2. The technically ambitious project is the result of the collaboration between Lufthansa and Boeing's Connexion reached in mid-June 2001.

Any standard notebook can be easily connected to the on-board network via an Ethernet network cable.

The new service will be free of charge to all passengers on Lufthansa flights between Frankfurt and Washington until April 15. Later on, Internet access is expected to cost between 30 and 35 euros per flight leg.

(Vicky Karantzavelou)

## McDonald's Obesity Suit Dismissed

New York, January 22 (Reuters) — McDonald's Corporation won a victory on Wednesday when a federal judge threw out a widely watched lawsuit that blamed Big Macs, fries and Chicken McNuggets for obesity in children.

US District Judge Robert Sweet said the plaintiffs failed to show that customers of the world's largest fast-food chain were unaware that eating too much McDonald's fare could be unhealthy.

But the judge accepted complaints that McDonald's Chicken McNuggets were a "McFrankenstein creation" of elements not used by home cooks, saying the plaintiffs could re-file their case with more information backing their claims.

At issue, the judge said, was where to draw the line between personal responsibility and society's responsibility to protect individuals. He also cited concerns the case could "spawn thousands of similar 'McLawsuits'" against all types of restaurants.

(Gail Appleson)

## Japan to Cut Financial Support to UN

Tokyo, January 21 (The New York Times) — Japan plans to cut its support for the UN by one-quarter in coming years, senior foreign policy makers said.

Japan, the second-largest financial contributor to the UN, calculates that its gross domestic product accounts for only 14.4 percent of the global economy, while it pays 19.5 percent of the UN budget, almost \$1 billion a year. By contrast, the United States accounts for 30 percent of world gross domestic product, but pays only 22 percent.

Japan says its planned cuts are partly motivated by the nation's worsening financial condition. Japanese taxes will barely cover one half of this year's nearly \$700 billion budget. "Japan's fiscal situation is worse than Italy's," said a Mr. Okamoto, a member of Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's office.

(James Brooke)

## WB: Innovation Key to East Asia's Growth

Tokyo, January 16 (World Bank) — Reform, technology and innovation, combined with investment in education and knowledge could breathe new life into East Asia's development prospects, and speed the transition of a number of countries into the ranks of developed nations, according to a new World Bank study, Innovative East Asia: The Future of Growth.

The report states that resources expenditure and exports were the major forces driving economic growth in the past three decades, while the future of East Asia rests on innovation, which could raise the added-value of products and extend reach into service sectors.

The study is the result of a three-year research project initiated at the request of the Japanese government on the future directions of economic change in East Asia.

## Kodak Slashes More Jobs

Rochester, New York, January 22 (AP) — Photography icon Eastman Kodak said it would cut another 1,800 to 2,200 jobs, or about 3 percent of its global work force.

The cuts were announced as the world's largest photography company reported a profit for the fourth quarter that fell short of Wall Street's expectations and its chairman cautioned that economic conditions looked tough for the year ahead.

Kodak controls about two-thirds of the US film market. The company eliminated 7,000 jobs last year, shrinking its work force to 70,000 people.

# UK Welcomes Cheaper Shoes, Tomatos ...

London, January 21 (AP) — Cheaper shoes and clothing contributed last month to a fall of 0.1 percentage points in Britain's inflation rate to 2.7 percent, the British government announced Tuesday this week.

The underlying rate of inflation fell in December from a four-year high of 2.8 percent, according to data from the country's Office for National Statistics.

The office credited the decline to widespread discounts on shoes and clothes. Prices for cucumbers, tomatoes and other foods also rose more slowly than during the same month a year ago, it said.

Xinhua Photo



# US Trade Gap to Set New Records in 2003

New York, January 18 (Reuters) — The U.S. trade deficit will probably set record highs over the next two years despite sluggish economic growth, a Reuters poll has found.

Economists predict a \$473 billion trade deficit in 2003. The deficit is expected to grow to \$503 billion in 2004.

While official US international trade balance data for 2002 won't be released for another month, economists believe the figure will break the current record of \$365.5 billion in 2000, because the trade deficit for January through October 2002 stands at \$350.2 billion.

In times of recession and slower economic growth, trade deficits typically narrow as consumer spending weakens, and as a weak economy tends to undermine the value of the dollar, imports become more expensive and exports cheaper for foreign buyers.

While US economic growth remains sluggish, economists are quick to point out the economies of many of America's major trading partners are growing even more slowly, leading to slack demand overseas for US goods, services and financial assets.

"The main reason the trade deficit continues to grow is that the US economy continues to outgrow the rest of the world even though it is experiencing a slow recovery," said Gerald Cohen at Merrill Lynch.

(Daniel Bases)

## Analysts' Take:

## Trade Deficit Is A Headache, Not Crisis

Wang Youli

The US has been bothered by its foreign trade deficit for the past two and a half decades. The deficit has grown from \$50 billion in the early 1990s to 2001's record of \$365.5 billion.

The figure seems terrifying at first glance. But if we study it in depth, we will understand why the US isn't panicking.

The major factor behind the figure is the US' dynamic domestic market demand and the lack of growth in exports.

America also lists three other factors behind the deficit: the decrease of US-based companies' worldwide competitiveness, unfair practices by its trading partners, and the strength of the US dollar.

The solution to the trade deficit is the increasing worldwide production and marketing revenues generated by US multinationals.

In the last decade, US multinationals have

established a sophisticated production network around the world, known as globalization. In 1998 alone, these multinationals generated \$623 billion in revenues, most of which went back home to the US.

Devaluation of the US dollar is also an option, as that would help stimulate exports. But the US government won't use this tool too aggressively because a weak US dollar would harm US investment worldwide. And the world currency market does not want to see a drastically devalued dollar either. That's why though we believe the dollar is over-valued by the market, it is still weakening little by little, quite conservatively.

(Wang Youli is the senior researcher of the Institute of American and Oceanic Studies, Chinese Academy of International Trade and Economic Cooperation. Ms. Wang has been studying Sino-US economic and trade relations for decades.)



# A Donation of Love

By Chen Ying

Dang Binglai and Wang Zheng, a middle-aged couple, were both wheeled into a surgical room last week, assuring each other that because they went in together, they would leave together as well.

Their faith proved well-founded.

On January 19 at the Second Artillery Hospital in Xicheng District, Dang Binglai, a veteran, successfully donated one of his kidneys to his ailing wife.

Dang married Wang in Henan Province in 1989. Then Wang was diagnosed with atrophy of her kidneys in 1991. The couple used up all their savings and even amassed debts of



Dang Binglai and Wang Zheng comforted each other before the successful operation.  
Photo by Zhou Mingjie

50,000 yuan in treating Wang's illness, but to no avail. Desperate, Wang attempted suicide three times between 1991 and 2001.

Dang, however, never abandoned hope that his wife's illness could be overcome. In March last year, her condition worsened to the point of complete kidney failure. Doctors told her she would die if she did not receive a kidney transplant.

After borrowing money from their entire village at the end of last year, Dang and Wang set out for the Second Artillery Hospital, but they still had to wait for a donor.

As time was running out, Dang decided to give one of his kidneys to his wife. He comforted her by saying, "you would do the same for me."

Miraculously, checks showed Dang's kidney was just the kind Wang

needed.

According to the hospital, if everything continues to go well, Wang will need to undergo another operation on January 29, this time to receive bone marrow from her husband. That operation is intended to stave off risk of rejection of the transplanted kidney and should save the couple a small fortune in costs for anti-rejection medication.

This week, the couple received more good news. Livzon Medicine decided to donate a lifetime supply of anti-transplant-rejection drugs to Wang. Moreover, the hospital has decided to completely waive its normal 100,000 yuan fee for a transplant operation.



Photo by Chen Jiabin

## Baby Mummy Brought to Light

By Lily Li

The exhibition entitled *Tian Mountain Old Road East and West Wind — Xinjiang Cultural Relics along The Silk Road* opened Saturday in the China History Museum. On display are archaeological discoveries from the ninth century BC to tenth century AD.

The exhibition includes the first mummified baby ever shown in Beijing. The ancient remains date back to 800 BC, and like the other adult mummies on display, were excavated from the Taklamakan Desert. The exhibition will close on April 15.

## Kamikaze Swans Saved

By Hou Mingxin / Xing Xuebo

On January 19, residents of the Xiaoyueyuan community in Fengtai district came to the aid of an unexpected couple - two wounded swans.

"It was about 12:20 pm, and I was sitting in my office, when I suddenly heard a huge sound outside the window. I went to see what happened and saw a wounded swan lying on the ground near the window of my neighboring office," said Liu Xinxin, an employee of the community's management committee.

Later, she found another injured swan on the floor of the same room. The swan had actually crashed right through the office's window.

"Both swans had hurt their wings, and one was bleeding," Liu added. "So I brought them into my office and treated their wounds."

Residents of Xiaoyueyuan heard about the accident and came to see the wounded birds, many bringing food or supplies to dress the swans' injuries.

Shortly after, someone called the China Small Animal Protection Association (CSAPA) to report the incident. At around 10:00 pm that night, Lu Di, an employee of the CSAPA, arrived at the building and took the two birds away to receive professional care.

According to Lu, the two birds, one male and one female, are mute swans, a first-grade nationally protected animal.

"We figure the reason they dropped from the sky was simple exhaustion from their migration south from Siberia. My association will give further treatment to the wounded birds, and then return them to the wild once they have recovered," she added.



## A Couple of Quackers

By Lily Li

Pedestrians and drivers can witness a strange sight nearly every morning along Jiangtai Lu - an old man walking down the street, followed by a shuffling duck wearing big red shoes a bow tie.

While walking, the duck tends to keep its head high and cross its wings behind its back, just like the cartoon character Donald Duck.

Li Yongjun, owner of the two-year-old bird, said, "this duck is very smart. I tend to clasp my hands behind my back when I walk. The duck has learned to imitate me."

To protect the duck's feet during their five-kilometer strolls, Li has fashioned increasingly complicated shoes for his pet. "At first, the duck didn't like to wear shoes, but now it has gotten used to them. Before we head out, the duck jumps on a chair and raises its feet, looking for help with its shoes," he said.

Photos by Chen Jian

## Karate Kids Back Home

By Su Wei / Shao Hua

Less than two days after they ran away from their homes, seven middle school students with hopes of learning Shaolin gong-fu, returned safely to their families around ten days ago.

*Beijing Today* has been asked not to disclose the students' names.

On January 11, five girls and two boys, all 13 years old and members of Class One of the School for Migrant Workers' Children in Fengtai district did not attend their final examinations but gathered in woods near the Beijing - Shijiazhuang expressway. There they finalized their plans to study martial arts at the Shaolin Temple in Henan Province.

In letters left for their parents, the children wrote they wanted to study kung-fu at the temple for two years so that they would no longer be bullied by their classmates. "I want to be a new Huang Feihong, the master of Chinese kung-fu. Then I'll be able to beat down any of my classmates," wrote one girl.

After spending a total of 30 yuan on bus tickets to Daxing District in Henan, they decided to make it the rest of the way to the temple on foot. "We had only around 70 yuan left," recalled another girl.

During their two-day trudge, the students had nothing but instant noodles to eat.

"We did not rest until we arrived at Gu'an [Hebei province] on the night of January 11," said the girl. "We even walked at night. Sometimes we were cheated by local people who wanted to talk us into working for them. But we believed that as long as we arrived at the temple, everything would be all right."

When they arrived at Bazhou on the following noon, an argument divided the group. "Four of them started complaining that we were walking too slowly, and said it was our fault we hadn't reached the temple already," said one of the three girls who returned to Beijing that day with the help of the Hebei police.

After those three students decided to head home, the other four said they would go to Tianjin to find work and made some money first.

On January 13, the four youths were found by Tianjin police, as the three girls had revealed their plan to the Beijing police. They were brought back to Beijing that night.

According to the police, two to three of the girls now hope to transfer to another school, but they are unwilling to disclose their reasons. Two of the boys have said that they still plan on running away to learn martial arts if the opportunity reveals itself.



Xiao Shuang's mother holds a copy of the letter her daughter wrote before she disappeared.  
Photo by Mily

By Lily Li

The dashing of her college dreams drove a 19-year-old girl to commit a desperate act last week.

"I don't want to live. What do I have to care about? I should enjoy myself before I die. Classes and exams? I'll leave them for my next life," wrote Xiao Shuang (nickname) in her computer before running away from home at noon last Thursday.

Her mother, Mrs. Li, said, "This has all happened because she didn't get into her dream university, Tsinghua, which made her very unhappy."

Xiao's score on the 2001 National College Entrance Examination was just a few points short of Tsinghua University's cut-off line. After Xiao received the disappointing news, her father counseled her that she could still go to another outstanding university, but she refused and decided to take the tests again a year later.

However, her scores also come up short the second time around, leaving her no choice but enter another university. Her parents said she found that prospect unacceptable.

"The reason she was so set on Tsinghua is that she thought that university would give her the best opportunity to go abroad, which has been her dream since she was in middle school and had some foreign friends," said Li.

Her parents described Xiao Shuang as an introverted girl who doesn't like to share her thoughts with others.

Doctor Hong Baose, vice dean of psychology faculty in Beijing Tongren Hospital, said "boys and girls running away due to heavy school and family pressure has become a common phenomenon."

Xiao did not tell anyone of her plans or where she intended to go,

leaving her parents no choice but to turn to the police and start their own desperate search. So far, no clues as to her whereabouts have been found.

Her mother said, "She said she didn't want to live, but she also said she wanted to find some happiness."

At press time, the girl's whereabouts were still unknown. Through tears, her mother told *Beijing Today*, "I just want my child to come back home. Xiao Shuang, I miss you!"

Xiao Shuang is 1.68 meters tall, wears glasses and has a ponytail. She was dressed in a long white down coat with a red cap, scarf and bag when she ran off.

Her family is appealing to the public to help them find their daughter. If you have any information about Xiao Shuang's whereabouts, please contact *Beijing Today* by phone at 6590 2020.



Photos by Zhang Bin

## Bus Signs Vandalized

### Illegal bus operators suspect in sign destruction

By Ivy Zhang

One day after the opening of Beijing Yuntong Transportation's new no. 112 bus line, 28 of its bus stop signs disappeared and 27 more were found coated in dark paint.

The bus line, which links Green Island Garden in Mentougou with Shigezhuang in Haidian, opened on Friday after six months of preparatory work. There are 65 stops along the line.

The missing and vandalized signs were discovered on Saturday morning. That afternoon, Beijing Yuntong Transportation received a tip that some of the signs had been found in the river at Mentougou Xilaodian.

The company sent some employees to the river



Sixteen stolen signs were dredged from the bottom of the river at Mentougou Xilaodian.

with a raft to try to fish out the sign boards. However, the signs were sunk deeply into the river bottom, so the "rescue team" was forced to ask help from seven winter-swimmers paddling nearby. After one hour of cold, hard work, 16 signs owned by Yuntong were recovered, 10 from the no. 112 line and six from the no. 206 line.

Liu Jianqiong, director of Yuntong's administration department said, "There are many illegal buses that operate along these lines, so competition is fierce. Unfortunately, we have no way to watch all the bus stops all day. This is not an issue of morality, this is simply a violation of the law."

He added the company has called in the police to look into the case. In the meantime, no. 112 buses will operate as usual while the search for the lost signs continues.

The paint-covered signs remain a problem, despite efforts made by local people to scrape them clean.

Yuntong had a similar experience with sign vandalization in late 1999, when over 30 signs for the no. 206 lines disappeared. It was eventually uncovered that the thefts were perpetrated by employees of the Beijing Bus Corporation. The two companies ended up settling the matter out of court.

"The people who did this were not thieves looking for money. They deliberately damaged the bus line, thereby harming the image of our company, and that of Beijing," said Liu.

## Disappointed Student Runs Away



By Chen Ying

“I regard traffic jams in Beijing as a sign of the city's prosperity. It's good news! Our economy would be in poor shape if we didn't have any traffic jams.”

This opinion gained a lot of attention last week for a professor at the Beijing University School of Economics who also happens to be a delegate of the municipal congress. But it probably wasn't the kind of attention he wanted. A seemingly harmless comment on one of the many wonderful things about Beijing succeeded in enraging a surprising number of people.

Professor Liu Wei made his remark when interviewed by *Beijing Youth Daily* on January 15, during the first meeting of the 12th People's Congress of Beijing, which was held from January 12 to 19.

Liu told *Beijing Youth Daily*, “We admire other cities' orderliness while they admire our exuberance.”

Traffic jams are an increasingly visible problem in Beijing. There was a particularly awesome crunch on December 7, 2001 which many people still remember. Though it turned out the immovable gridlock was the result of an accident which itself was caused by that winter's first big snowfall, people were in the mood for blame. It seems this mood has not dispersed. The local government has taken some measures to alleviate congestion, but they don't appear to be working.

Liu's quote infuriated a number of journalists and readers who wrote in to various organs complaining that his sentiments were ridiculous and irresponsible while others thought he had a point. Opinions follow:

**Sheng Dalin, commentator for Sina.com**

For most citizens, traffic jams are a real headache. People have to spend far more of their day commuting and schedules often go right out the car window. It's a little difficult to reschedule when you have absolutely no idea when you're going to arrive at your destination. And we're supposed to think traffic jams are good news?

Of course you couldn't say a city was prosperous if there were few cars or people on the street. And yes, if more people are buying cars it's because they have enough money to do so.

But these jams show that our city planning lacks foresight. It also shows the city is running out of development space. Traffic

# When is Traffic Good?

## Municipal congress delegate's view causes controversy



At Changhong Bridge on the East Third Ring Road, Wednesday afternoon

Photo by Jackey

jams damage citizens' quality of life as well as Beijing's investment and business environment. Pretty soon these jams aren't going to be such good news for the economy.

Should a city's prosperity be judged by how nightmarish its traffic is? Many famous cities, such as Paris and Tokyo, experienced severe traffic jams but they found a way to deal with it and alleviate the problem.

**Meng Qingxuan, economics professor, Beijing University**

Liu's quote is just a metaphor; there's no need to take it so seriously. It's because the local economy has developed so fast that people can purchase private cars. The automobile industry has become one of the major driving forces behind the growth in GDP.

On the other hand, there is no inevitable relationship between traffic jams and economic development. Traffic jams can be avoided if a city's urban planning is reasonable. But this needs time and money. The US spent several decades developing a road system capable of accommodating modern traffic flow. Because of the fast economic development in Beijing, road construction and rebuilding can't keep up.

Also, the urban area of Beijing is based on an ancient design. This makes planning more difficult. The reason Beijing has traffic jams is not because the roads are not wide enough, but because there simply aren't enough roads. New York is made up of thousands of blocks, making it easy for drivers to get to their destination. Also, there are plenty of car parks

there. I think private car owners in Beijing will soon find it hard to get parking places.

**Wei Yu, white collar worker**

I think Liu's quote is reasonable. The traffic is caused not by the number of vehicles but the speed of development of the local economy meaning that it's suddenly become possible for lots of people to buy their own cars.

We can't overlook the need for road planning and construction but it will take time and money to get this right. Even though the government never stops constructing roads, it's impossible to build them fast enough. Two years ago I wouldn't have imagined I would soon own a car. But now I do. This shows how fast the economy is moving in Beijing.

## Traffic Issue

At the end of 2001 there were about 1.69 million automobiles in Beijing, according to *Beijing Youth Daily*. The number reached 1.88 million only 11 months later. About 1.18 million of these are private cars. At the end of last September, more than 2.9 million people in Beijing had driver's licenses.

Meanwhile, statistics indicate the local government has a long way to go in developing public transportation systems to alleviate the traffic burden. A report in *Economic Daily* in August last year pointed out that there are only two subway lines running over 53.7 kilometers in Beijing.

The subway and public buses absorb only 30 percent of the total burden of transportation in the capital. The subway in New York is about 1,142 kilometers in length. In London it's about 500 kilometers. The London underground absorbs 40 percent of the city's transportation burden every day while urban trains take 70 percent of the burden in Paris and 80 percent in Tokyo.

# We Should Expel Him, Right?

## Kunming college teachers and students vote on whether to dismiss a student

By Lily Li

Is it “democratic” for a student to be expelled following a vote held among staff and students? For East United College, a private college in Kunming, Yunnan Province, the answer is “yes”.

The college forced a student to leave following a “public vote” on December 30, 2002. According to Professor Yang Fuhu, dean of East United College, 90% voted for Li Honghua (pseudonym) to be booted out of the college.

Li Honghua entered East United College in August 2001 and was frequently punished for ignoring school discipline. In September 2001, Li got a warning for being drunk and raising hell on the campus. In September 2002, he had an argument with a classmate, surnamed Wang, and slapped him in the face.

On December 21, 2002, Li assaulted the associate president of the Student Union who had argued with his girlfriend. Five days later, Li injured Mr. Zheng, his girlfriend's teacher who was knocking at the dormitory's door to remind the students of an upcoming English exam. A fight broke out in which Li bust Mr. Zheng's lip and broke his glasses.

Later that day Li refused to listen to the dean who was lecturing him on his behavior. Li

rushed out the office, kicked open a classroom door and beat up the associate president of the Student Union a second time.

“Besides his bad behavior on the campus, Li Honghua played truant from 96 classes during the term,” says Mr. Huang, a medical teacher in the college.

The college decided it was time to show Li Honghua the door.

After careful consideration, and in order to “educate other students”, the college also asked all the teachers and students to discuss and vote on this decision. Since 90 percent of the teachers and students welcomed the college's decision, Li was forced to leave the college.

Professor Yang Fuhu said it was not the first time the teachers and students in East United College had been asked for their opinions on a decision. “As a private college, we should look for ways of helping students develop faster,” said Yang. “Respecting a public decision is one way of doing this.”

Yang said this kind of public decision could help teach students about the nature of democracy as well as giving them a sense of social responsibility.

However, critics say this kind of “democracy” is an illusion. “There are many methods to educate students about democracy

besides voting publicly on whether to expel Li Honghua. And when the college asks for the students' opinions on one of its decisions, it undermines its own rights and duty,” said Cao Baoyin, writer for Yang Cheng Evening News.

Does voting on an issue such as this represent democracy? Is it right for the college to give such rights to the students? Did Li Honghua deserve this treatment? Opinions follow:

**Tang Fei, graduate student at the Institute of Engineering, Thermo-physics, Chinese Academy of Sciences**

I disagree with the vote and I don't think it represents democracy.

If the student made mistakes, he should be punished according to the rules of the college. There shouldn't be any need to put it to a vote.

In a court of law, the members of the jury should have no conflict of interests with the defendant. But, in this case, many teachers and students who voted on what to do with Li Honghua knew him or had lived with him, which means they would not be able to give an impersonal and impartial judgment on Li and the mistakes he had made.

This is just lip-service democracy, through which the college

wants to palm off responsibility on the students.

**Li Zhuo, sales manager, Marketing & Sales Department of Infosto Information Technology (Beijing) Ltd.**

I think the dean was being reasonable.

First, the college has the right to dismiss a student and also has to take the responsibility for that. They needn't ask others to vote on what they can decide by themselves. But the fact they did shows the college has respect not only for the teachers and students, but also for the dismissed student.

Second, we should encourage such efforts to develop an environment of democracy instead of snuffing them out. Teaching people about democracy represents a kind of progress.

All in all, if what the college says is true, this punishment is not excessive for Li Honghua. The bitter wine he made, he should drink.

**Eugene Kosolapov, a Russian employee at AIESEC America**

In my country it is common practice now to make a decision on some issues by student poll, but only on those questions which are not defined in the college's constitution.

However, issues such as violent behavior are different as it is strictly forbidden and should be regulated automatically without any need for a vote. Voting on whether to punish violent behavior has nothing to do with democracy.

The college shouldn't have asked the students to vote on such an issue. It's not their business.

**Zhou Shijun, writer for Jiang Nan Times**

Do we need a vote to dismiss a student? Of course not. It's actually an abuse of democracy to say that this is the kind of issue that should be voted on.

And as for Li Honghua, just because he is a bad student, should his mistakes be picked over by the whole college? What about his right to privacy?

College is where students are taught and educated. However, the school didn't accept the responsibility of reforming a bad student, but dismissed him through a public vote. Such irresponsible behavior only can push the student into a more isolated position and make him face the rain and wind alone. Can we say this college has a sense of social responsibility? And if the college itself hasn't a sense of responsibility, how can it help its students develop one?

### SOUND BITES

“People have a different viewpoint nowadays. Early retirement means less income and a waste of experience.”

— Yang Peiying, senior official with the Ministry of Personnel in charge of salary, welfare and retirement, regarding a policy established decades ago in a bid to protect female workers. According to the policy, the retirement age for female staff is 50, and 55 for men.

“War is not inevitable. The only framework for a legitimate solution is the United Nations. For us, war is always the proof of failure and the worst of solutions, so everything must be done to avoid it.”

— French President Jacques Chirac, countering blunt talk of war by the Bush administration. France and Germany on Wednesday insisted that they are committed to a peaceful solution to the Iraq crisis.

“Strategy was out the door; it was just pure fighting. My respect for him just grew and grew throughout this match, and I'm sure it's vice versa. I don't remember ever talking to Younes before this match. But we could see each other 10 years down the line and know we had shared something pretty special.”

— American tennis player Andy Roddick, victorious after a quarterfinal match of more than 80 games, lasting four and a half hours against Younes El Aynaoui of Morocco. It was the longest Australian Open match in more than 30 years.

By Chen Ying



# Ripping Off Migrant Workers

By Su Wei

Seventeen-year-old Qu Anchang left his home in Sichuan and came to Beijing to make ends meet as a laborer. Now he's curled up in a worn gray cotton coat, shivering in a shelter in a construction site near Xizhimen, Haidian District. He coughs continually. "He has a fever," says Liu Jiang, 21, Qu's cousin. "I should have taken him to hospital. But none of us have been paid. Not for the whole year. We have no money to see a doctor."

Qu, an aspiring oil painter, came to Beijing eight months ago. "My father is bed ridden. My brother is so young. I cannot allow my mother to raise the whole family," says Qu. "I heard that a construction worker can earn around 4,000 yuan per year. I thought I could save some money and eventually continue my studies."

Liu becomes impatient and interrupts him. "There's no point talking about going back to school any more. It is difficult enough for us to afford to buy food. The boss of our team Chen Bin disappeared the day before he was due to pay our wages. No one knows where he's gone."

Liu says in the past year he and the other 20 migrant workers in the team have not been paid any money. "The only thing we got was the monthly meal tickets. Even when we were ill and could not go to work, Chen would give us no more than 30 yuan to see a doctor."

Liu says they only know that Chen is also from Sichuan. "We call him 'little boss' as his boss is another man from Sichuan — 'big boss' — who runs several construction teams."

Last month Liu and his fellow workers approached the "big boss" and asked him to pay their wages. "But he told us he had already given the money to Chen so he only gave us 40 yuan each. Just 40 yuan."

So they went to a lawyer's office to inquire about suing the two bosses. "We gave up after they told us we had to pay several thousand yuan in fees first," complains Liu.

They then went to the Labor Supervision Department of Haidian District after being told the department was responsible for seeing that they were paid. "The staff of the department told us to come back one week later. When we came back on January 6, they asked us to wait and said they would inform us after the investigation," says Liu.

All these construction workers agree it is complicated seeking help from the government. "We have spent a lot of money on transportation. But it is worth doing," says Liu.

They told *Beijing Today* they are expecting to get some of their wages this week.

They are a small number of the 850,000 migrant workers in Beijing. Is their experience unusual?

domly selected migrant workers working in Beijing, Zhejiang and Anhui. Nearly 73 percent said their wages had not been paid.

After the survey came out, a lot of reports appeared in the Chinese media backing up its findings.

Around 1,400 cases of migrant workers not being paid were handled by the Bureau of Labour and Social Security in Fuzhou, Fujian province last year, resulting in 12 million yuan being recovered for the workers involved.

In Ningxia last year, construction companies had failed to pay wages totaling 300 million yuan to migrant workers. In Guangdong last year, there were over 10,000 cases involving 970,000 migrant workers who had not been paid. The total sum of unpaid wages was 400 million yuan. In Beijing last year it was even worse. A total of 2.2 billion yuan in wages had not been paid.

The Xinhua survey looked into the methods workers resort to to get their money. 48 workers said they just kept on asking till their bosses got sick of it and coughed up. Twelve said they expected this unfair treatment and that there wasn't much they felt they could do about it. Eight said they would take some extreme actions such as climbing high buildings or cranes or making some kind of threat. Only one of the workers said he would seek judicial help.

One migrant worker from Sichuan took particularly extreme action. When Xu Tianlong went to his boss, Project Manager Sun, in Jinan, Shandong and asked for wages of 10,000 yuan to be paid to him and his 15 fellow workers he was beaten by Sun's followers. Xu decided to deal with the situation by dousing himself in petrol, setting himself on fire and trying to grab hold of Sun to burn him to death. The plan went up in smoke when Sun struggled free and Xu was left scarred for life with burns to 12 per cent of his body.

Sun arranged for 10,000 yuan to be paid for Xu's medical expenses. This was only half of the payment the company guaranteed for hospitalization.

"The family is still waiting for the rest of the money. Does paying the rest of it really mean so much to the bosses?" asked Xu, upon waking up from his operation. "It's one thing if they tell us they have no money. But why did they beat me? I had no choice but to do something like that. My only regret is that I didn't kill Sun."

Su Hainan, director of the Research Institute of Labor and Social Security, concludes that the problem of workers not being paid is rampant in north east, north west and south east areas, especially in the construction, clothes-making, food and beverage industries.

## Complicated reasons

Part of the reason for this situation, according to Su, is the current period of economic transition that China is going through. A lot of changes have occurred in



Fu Shengli, a migrant worker climbed up to the top of an advertising hoarding near Liuliqiao, Fengtai District on January 17 to draw attention to his unpaid wages.

Fengtai firemen tried to rescue him but he only came down when police-men form the Public Security Bureau, Fengtai Branch, shouted at him to come down.

Photos by Wang Wei / Huang Liang

the running of several industries and new regulations have not necessarily been drawn up, let alone implemented. Some enterprises are taking advantage of the chaos. "Not paying wages is a pretty obvious method of cutting costs," said Su.

"Migrant workers usually have little education and are regarded as a disadvantaged group even by themselves. They feel inferior to city dwellers and do not dare to argue with their bosses.

Lacking sufficient awareness to protect their rights, they are more likely to suffer unfair treatment," added Su. "Many of them don't give any thought to signing a contract with the construction company. Their demands are very low. As long as they have jobs, something to eat and get their wages or maybe only a part, they feel satisfied."

Of the 400,000 migrant workers in Zhengzhou, less than 10,000 have signed contracts with the construction companies. Over 90 percent of the construction workers in Xining, Qinghai, do not have contracts with their construction companies. "This means they are not registered at the local labor administration departments and can be treated as illegal workers. Without a contract, you have no guarantee of anything," says Su. "Unfortunately, for many of those who have signed contracts, the contracts are often invalid. They are either signed by their bosses or do not mention any provisions, such as medical expenses or the date for payment of wages."

"We need a sound legal system to prevent non-payment of wages," says Li Peilin, senior researcher of the Institute of Sociology of China's Academy of Social Sciences. "There are around 150 million workers in China who are not members of trade unions and 50 million of these are migrant workers. Most of them have no idea what a trade union is so they don't bother joining or think about seeking help from the union."

Regarding the existing regulations set up by the central and provincial governments relating to labor security, Li says they do not include any tough provisions for punishment of companies that don't pay their workers. The regulations that do exist "are too general and too weak. They are supposed to be fines for not paying wages on time, but the fines are so small everyone ignores them. The maximum fine is 50,000 yuan. But the unpaid wages amount to hundreds of thousands," adds Li.

Cheng Baoming, a real estate project development manager, concedes that some of the developers including him often undertake projects they do not have enough funds for. "This means the developers owe money to the construction companies, which in turn owe money to the construction workers," he says.

After bidding for a contract, he usually turns over the project to a small company which either conducts the project itself or finds an individual who runs a construction team. "That way the cost is much lower than if I undertake the project," says Cheng. "I can get at least 2.5 percent of the profit — which is an average of 300,000 yuan for each project — from the company I give the project to. Few people worry about the management of the migrant workers."

Li Enhe, vice director of the social security department of the All China Trade Union says this project delegation results in wages not being paid

directly to the construction workers. "Instead the cash passes from bosses to companies and teams. If the team boss absconds with the money, the migrant workers have no way of getting their money back."

Su adds that in the construction industry, wages are usually not paid until the project is completed as this removes the responsibility of paying wages early on. "The workers can only get their monthly meal tickets equivalent to 200 or 300 yuan per month." He highlights that this method of wage payment violates Labor Law, but none of the construction workers complain about it.

Wang Qun, a worker in a construction site near Beixinqiao, Dongcheng District who is also waiting for his wages to be paid listened to *Beijing Today's* explanation of the role played by the labor supervision department in retrieving unpaid money. But he said he would still prefer to ask his boss for his money. "It is more direct and less time consuming. What I want is the money, not to get someone else in trouble." But he agrees that legal help "sounds more powerful and probably more effective."

Liu Yongfu, vice general director of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security, concedes that the period from lodging legal proceedings to the announcement of the arbitration result usually takes at least two months, which may be seen as an advantage by the company in undermining workers' will and patience.

Su says another reason for the problem of unpaid wages is the small number of staff in labor administration departments who have the responsibility of dealing with the problem. "There are only 40,000 such staff in China as a whole. The conditions in large cities, though better, are still ineffective in wage payment supervision," he says. "In large cities such as Shenzhen, Shanghai and Beijing, the ratio of supervision staff to employees is around 1:20,000. So wage payment examination can only be conducted at the end of each year. By that time the problem already exists."

## New regulations

In Shenzhen and Shanghai, funds are being set up for wage compensation by the local government. These funds will come from company contributions or the proceeds of the sale of bankrupted companies.

The establishment of Beijing Legal Help Work Station for Migrant Workers on January 16 is aimed to provide free legal help to the 850,000 migrant workers in Beijing. The help will range from legal consultation to providing lawyers in legal proceedings for free.

The Labor and Social Security Bureau is speeding up its examination of wage payment. It will also require all companies employing migrant workers to sign contracts with these workers. Otherwise they will be liable for fines of at least 1,000 yuan.

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The apartment from which Zhao Guiying jumped to her death

Photo provided by Huangshang Daily

## Who Snatched *Hero* ?

By Sun Ming

A woman committed suicide by jumping from a sixth floor apartment on the morning of Thursday last week in Xi'an, Shaanxi Province. She died in hospital half an hour later.

Zhao Guiying, 40, had been questioned by police the day before in connection with the suspected theft on January 7 of a copy of *Hero* from the cinema where she worked.

**Hero, directed by Zhang Yimou, has had video pirates salivating for months. By grossing more than 200 million yuan since opening on December 20 in China, it has created a new box office record for a Chinese movie, topped only by "Titanic" which took 360 million yuan. So piracy of the film has become a heated issue.**

Rumors started to circulate that someone in the cinema had removed the copy in order to sell it to someone making pirate DVDs. "She killed herself because she was innocent," Zhao's husband Zhang Liming told *Chengdu Economic Daily* on Saturday at his wife's funeral.

### Hot film

*Hero* was shown in the Xiaozhai Workers Culture Palace from December 20 last year.

The last show before the copy was found missing was at 9:15 pm on January 6. At 9:30 am on January 7, the cinema found that a copy was missing. But there wasn't any damage to the two doors outside the room where the copy was kept, indicating that no-one had broken in.

"It was weird. Our staff watched over the copy all night," the manager

Chen Manping told *Beijing Today*.

Xiaozhai Police Station began to investigate the case on January 7.

"Xiaozhai Police Station thinks that somebody working in the cinema collaborated with people outside to steal the copy in order to make pirates," said *Chengdu Economic Daily* on Sunday last week.

According to the newspaper, policemen questioned over 30 staff members of the cinema, including Zhao Guiying, after the copy was lost. Zhao's version of events was different to everyone else's, so she was questioned again on January 15.

The newspaper said that a high quality version of *Hero* had already come out on pirate DVD in Sichuan Province, shortly after the copy was lost in Xi'an. "It seems that the pirate DVD was made through a copy of the film, not through filming it in a theatre. The source for the pirate DVD may be the lost copy."

Xiaozhai Workers Palace got a new copy of *Hero* from the China Film Company on January 8. "The film is still on in the cinema, but the audience isn't as big as it was before this event," said *Chengdu Economic Daily* on Sunday.

### Reactions from legal VCD and DVD producers

*Huashang Daily*, a local newspaper in Xi'an, contacted Guangdong Weijia Audio-visual Company and Feishi Company, which cooperated to purchase the video distribution rights of the film for 17.8 million yuan.

The Feishi Company said it sent out teams of 20 people to detect pirates in nearly every city in China, which had cost it about 80,000 yuan. The two companies will cooperate to combat pirates, said the newspaper.

In order to avoid pirate copies being made of *Hero*, Beijing Picture Company, which distributed the film in China, published a declaration in December last year saying that a cinema would be fined if it lost a copy of the film. The fine would be 2 million yuan, 10 times

the price of a copy.

"Maybe we won't fine the cinema so strictly," Yu Yuxi, the manager of the Publishing Department of the company, told *Huashang Daily*.

Yu said that *Hero* had been shown in the cinema for quite a long time, so the value of the copy was not as high as before.

### Inside information

*Chengdu Economic Daily* quoted a source on Sunday last week who said that Zhao went to the room where the copy was kept at 7 am on January 7.

The copy was found to be lost two and a half hours later. Zhao had said that she left a pair of shoes in the room. She asked a staff member who was watching over the copy to open the doors. That staff member is also one of main suspects in the case, said the newspaper.

The source said Zhao was the person who was questioned most frequently by police.

### The voice of Zhao's Husband and friends

"She was treated unjustly," Zhao's husband Zhang Liming told *Chengdu Economic Daily*. Zhang said his wife hadn't left a note before she committed suicide.

"She promised to attend my wedding ceremony just one night before she killed herself," Miss Rong, Zhao's foster daughter told a *Chengdu Economic Daily* reporter on Saturday. "It seemed that she was quite normal. She cared about me very much." Rong said Zhao was still alive when she rushed to the scene. "It seemed that she wanted to say something, but she couldn't."

"Zhao was a good person," a staff member of the Xiaozhai Workers Palace told *Chengdu Economic Daily*.

Zhao had been the ticket seller and director of the film department of the cinema. She was the deputy manager of the ballroom of the cinema before she died.

## Is There a Future For Hope?

By Zeng Pengyu / Ivy Zhang

Project Hope is intended to raise funds to help children in poverty-stricken areas go to school. But how can we be sure that donations go to the children who need them instead of corrupt officials?

The project is a non-profit charity program launched in October 1989 by China Youth Development Foundation (CYDF).

It has made great achievements over the past 13 years, providing about 2.5 million children from underprivileged families with the chance to go to school and building about 9,000 Hope Schools. Its success inspired a flood of donations both from private citizens and companies all over China and from abroad.

However, just over a year ago, doubts started to emerge about exactly who this generosity was benefiting.

A report in *Nanfang Weekend* on November 30, 2001 gave details of forged letters to donors, indicating that funds were being siphoned off by corrupt administrative staff.

In September 2000, a small company named Shanghai Keyang donated 10,000 Yuan to CYDF in Sichuan Province to support the education of 25 children through Project Hope.

About a year later in August 2001, the company received seven letters, apparently from children in Fengcheng district, Xuanhan County, Sichuan Province. In the letters, the children said they had received the money.

But all seven letters were in the same handwriting and were mailed from the same post office. This aroused the suspicion of Gong Wenhui, the company's general manager.

The company and reporters from *Nanfang Weekend* newspaper looked into the case and found out that Tang Chunxu, an officer from Fengcheng district education office, forged the seven letters and embezzled 5,000 yuan while seven of the children in need received no money from Project Hope.

An eighth forged letter was later found in Tiansheng district in the same county, indicating that other officials were also taking money from donations.

Gong Wenhui said the company would continue to donate money to support children in need of schooling. "But we might not do it through Project Hope."

The case was a public relations disaster for the charity. Suspicion of the project's organizing body, CYDF, became widespread. The foundation has instigated a series of reforms to clean up its act.

This Monday, *Beijing Youth Daily* interviewed two top officials from the foundation, Gu Xiaojin, the general secretary, and Tu Meng, the standing deputy general secretary.

### Tackle management loopholes

Starting this year, a new model for distributing funds will be implemented.

In the past, CYDF distributed money to province-level CYDF offices, then the city or county level Project Hope offices, then the local governmental education organs in towns or villages, then the school and at last the students.

This meant the funds were changing too many hands. Not only did this cause high supervision costs, it also gave unscrupulous officials the opportunity to scim some of the funds.

From now on, the entire Project Hope subsidies will be distributed directly to the children through the Bank of Agriculture.

**Beijing Youth Daily:** Was this change in distribution requested by the government?

**Tu Meng:** On the contrary, we proposed the change ourselves. The incident with the fake letters made us realize we had to change the system. There were too many links in the old method, which resulted in delayed distribution as well as embezzlement.

**Beijing Youth Daily:** Can the new distribution method ensure timely distribution? Is it possible for the money to fall into the wrong hands?

**Tu Meng:** Before starting the new method, we tried it in remote areas in Yunnan, Guizhou and Inner Mongolia. Within 48 hours of the money being allocated from Beijing, hundreds of students were able to draw money from the Bank of Agriculture. Based on the agreement between us and the bank, every student who receives support from Project Hope will receive a bankbook, bearing the recipient's name. The bank will review the name list provided by CYDF and demand proof of identity from the recipients before giving them the money so that it will not go to the wrong person.

### Auditing donations

CYDF announced that starting from January 1, 2003, Project Hope would use new, standard receipts for donations and that they would be supervised by the Ministry of Finance.



Gu Xiaojin

Donors will be able to present the special receipt to the tax department for a tax-refund.

**Beijing Youth Daily:** What problems does the new receipt address? What was wrong with the old system?

**Gu Xiaojin:** I'll give you an example. In 2001, serious cracks appeared in the ceilings of a Telecom Hope School in Wenzhou, Zhejiang Province, after it had only been used for one year. The media reported this matter. When our men went there to investigate, we found the donations for the school were not made through CYDF. So this wasn't a proper Hope school even though it was using our name. The school was later closed, but the negative influence from the affair lasted a long time.

In the past, when something went wrong like this, it was hard to track how and where the funds had been spent because different kinds of receipts were used. With the new receipt, we can check how the donated money is being spent. The financial authorities will also be able to check on our use of the donations to Project Hope which will make auditing and public supervision easier.

**Beijing Youth Daily:** CYDF announced early last year that it planned to invite international auditing organizations to do annual audits for Project Hope. Any progress here?

**Gu Xiaojin:** We came up with this plan because more and more foreign businesses were donating money to Project Hope. They asked us to use overseas organs to audit the use of donations. But when we approached the foreign auditing companies, we found there was no accounting system available for non-profit organizations in China. If foreign auditing firms were to get involved, they would find there were no corresponding regulatory systems. We have to wait until the right system is set up.

### Year-end review of CYDF

**Beijing Youth Daily:** At the beginning of last year, CYDF set a fund-raising target of 60 million yuan. Were you successful?

**Gu Xiaojin:** It was a difficult year for CYDF. To be frank, we collected only 18 million yuan by the end of last June. But we managed to raise 60 million yuan by the end of the year. The specific figures will be made public after the audit is completed.

**Beijing Youth Daily:** Why was there such a big increase in the second half of the year?

**Gu Xiaojin:** It was mainly because Project Hope attracted big donations from some international companies like Motorola and Lucent as well as some domestic companies.

**Beijing Youth Daily:** CYDF kept silent in the first half of last year, why?

**Gu Xiaojin:** Yes, we did not say much last year. But we think we did some solid work and developed our system and project management. CYDF will continue implementing new measures and accept supervision from the public.



Tu Meng

Photos by Cui Jun





# Scoping for a Living

By Zhao Pu

It's every teenage girl's dream. You're walking down the street or picking up a few items in the mall and a man walks up and says you've got the potential to be a model. Quite apart from the compliment, it's also the ticket to an exciting new life and maybe career. For Beijingers, this is no longer such a hopeless dream.

Three months ago, the newly established Beijing Branch of international talent scout agency Trans Continental Talent (TCT) announced its arrival. An army of scouts was being sent out to scour the streets of the capital for beauty. Ads in the papers and on TV told the bright young things of Beijing to get out there and shake it!

Dino Yan was one of the 20 scouts. An enterprising young man, he successfully recommended himself to the company as a model as well as a talent scout.

Dino has been one of the most efficient scouts so far. In his first week, he successfully introduced 63 lithe lovelies for one "open call", an audition for the new faces. Now that's prolific. So what's this guy's secret? "A convincing smile," he says.

obstructive. They often trouble Dino in his work whenever he tries talking to a beautiful girl and asking her to accept his invitation. They're probably jealous.

So he walks up the street towards Sun Dong An Shopping Mall at the north end. At the gate of the mall he sees the first target of the day. Two young girls are coming from the opposite direction. "See that girl in the white coat? She'd qualify for a model," he murmurs. He walks up to them with no hesitation.

"Excuse me! I am a talent scout from TCT." He greets the girls with a confident smile, shows them his company card, and breaks into his familiar fluent patter. "Have you heard of Trans Continental Talent? The worldwide talent network who found Britney Spears and Back Street Boys? It opened an office in Beijing three months ago." He takes out a copy of *Beijing Evening Post* and shows them the news about TCT Beijing Branch, to convince them this isn't just some line. "I am a talent scout from TCT. I think you could make it as a new talent. Would you like to come to our open call tomorrow evening?"

The girl in white looks at her friend and hesitates. Dino presses on. "Your skin is so good, you would be a perfect cosmetics model." The girl smiles back, naturally pleased at all these compliments. "When and where?" she asks. Dino hands her a TCT invitation card and explains the time and location for the open call. "I'll see you at the open call!" He smiles sweetly to the girls and bids farewell. A good start.

Forty minutes later, Dino has successfully sent out three invitation cards. He found a second girl with beautiful hair by the elevator on the first floor in the mall, and a third girl on the second floor.

He feels a little thirsty and walks into Pizza Hut for a drink. "It wasn't always this easy," he says.

## Get away from my girlfriend!

Dino had heard of TCT from a friend living in the U.S. two years ago. His friend had been picked up by a TCT scout on the street. "We didn't have talent scouts in China at that time. I only heard about them in movies and novels," says Dino.

He was excited to see an ad placed by the company on a website last October, and sent in his resume applying for the position of talent scout. After an interview, he was enrolled in the company's scout army. Before fieldwork, they went through a comprehensive training course.

The first day was so hard Dino almost felt like giving up. "The last man I met that afternoon gave me

the strength to carry on," he says.

His first day as a scout was a sobering experience. He started from Guomao and walked westward. He found several young people at a telephone booth near Silk Alley. "Two of the girls were charming," Dino collected his nerve and walked up to them. "Excuse me! I am..." "NO!" A big hand appeared in front of his face as the boy using the telephone angrily pushed him away.



"Excuse me! I am a talent scout from TCT."

"I said nothing and just left." He left Silk Alley and walked down Chang'an Avenue.

His second target was a couple. "They were both tall and good-looking." Dino politely introduced himself to the couple and was told that they were already contracted models. "Though they refused, they were very polite to me."

Dino was beginning to lose confidence. He walked north from Dongdan to Dongsu and walked all the way back, without success. He was about to return to the company when he met his first candidate in Wangfujing. "He was a handsome man. I collected my courage and made a third try. He accepted the card." The man appeared two hours later at the open call.

## Rejections

There have been many more rejections since then. Not everyone is interested in becoming a model or an actor, and some don't take entertainment seriously as a career. But it's easier for Dino to take these days, and sometimes there's a silver lining.

"One rejection was really

interesting," he recalls. He saw a tall and handsome man in a subway station one evening. It was late and there were not many people around waiting for the train. Dino approached the young man and asked him whether he was interested in becoming a part-time model. "No! Definitely not. I'm an IT engineer, and I love my job. I'm not interested."

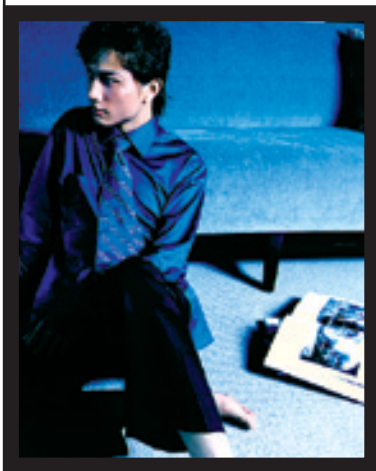
Just as Dino was turning away in disappointment the man asked him, "Are you the big talent scout company who prompted people to 'Get onto street with your star dream'? A friend of mine has been hanging around on the streets for a month, hoping to be discovered by one of your scouts. If you would like to contact him, I can give you his telephone number." Pretty soon after that the friend turned up at an open call.

Having had some experience as a part-time model before joining TCT and with good communication skills from his five-year's work in a five-star hotel, Dino is getting more and more proficient in his new job. "My success rate is 80 percent now," he proudly declares.

Dino says he loves his job, as it allows him a free lifestyle. "I can decide how many hours I work today, rather than spending eight hours in the office," he says. "I do more when I feel good, and

maybe tomorrow I'll just take it easy and relax, as long as I finish my workload on time."

And he can start work anywhere, anytime. "Sometimes I am just shopping in a supermarket and suddenly I'll see a girl selecting tomatoes who's not bad. I can go up to her and start my work. That's flexible."



A shirt advertisement. Dino is a model as well as a scout.



Off the street and into the studio

## A day in the life

Dino arrived at the Kerry Center at 1:50 pm last Monday with He Lei, a model he scouted on the street. They were both selected for a Canon advertisement and they came to attend a preview meeting arranged by Canon.

The meeting ends at about three o'clock and Dino says goodbye to his friend. It's time to shift from model to talent scout so he heads for the China World Trade Center, one of the prime hunting grounds.

He strolls around for a while, sizing up the shoppers, but no-one catches his eye. Not enough people. "Wangfujing is probably a better place right now, I'll try there."

Dino takes the subway from Guomao to Wangfujing. "I like taking the subway. It's also a good place for scouting," he says. Getting out at Wangfujing, he would normally head for Oriental Plaza as it's often packed with trendy youngsters, but these days the security guards are getting



On the cutie watch



Photos by Wang Wei



## A photograph of a traditional Chinese courtyard. On the left is a red building with a large, ornate wooden door. To the right, a large, leafy green vine-covered trellis arches over a seating area. Two wicker chairs with light-colored cushions are positioned under the trellis. The ground is paved with reddish-brown square tiles. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daytime.



# Artists Find Sanctuary in Unlikely Places

By Yu Shanshan

As formerly lively artists' villages wither and government support dries up, contemporary Chinese artists have found some refuge in old factories and warehouses in the Beijing area.

These high-ceiling workshops not only provide studio space, facilities and technical support for artists, but also should bring in audiences and funding. One of the most ambitious of these reformed warehouses is the Idea Field, which opened and held its first show on December 15 last year.

## A new platform

The Idea Field is being developed on the former grounds of the Wangmazi Scissors Factory in Shahe, Changping district. When completed, the 10,000-square-meter space designed by Wang Yonggang, director of the Idea Studio, and Lin Xiaodong, head of Washington D.C.-based Other Shore Arts, will house a gallery, a communications hall, a video room, an engraving workshop and a wood-work workshop. According to Lin, the workshop's opening exhibition, entitled *Attitude*, underscored the group's "completely open and welcoming attitude towards contemporary arts and the public." He added, "To our delight, more than 300 people came to the opening, despite the snow that day."

Beijing is not the only city witnessing a flourishing of warehouse-style art spaces. Studios and galleries have opened in deserted warehouses along the Suzhou River in Shanghai, and in the Chuangku complex in downtown Kunming, Yunnan Province.

Opened in June 2001, Chuangku is an old factory turned into a set of workshops, galleries and bars that have succeeded in bringing in a wide audience, including tourists, to check out the work of contemporary Chinese artists.

"This is a place where you can read about contemporary art or go down to the cafe and live it," said Tang Zhigang, one of founders of Chuangku.

Lin Xiaodong operates his own studio inside Chuangku, to which he invites foreign artists to work. He told the magazine *New Weekly*, "With this platform, we don't need to run around with our artwork. Instead we are the hosts of the playground and can invite all the world to play with us."

## Seeking public understanding

Like Changku, the goal of the



Fourteen artists participated in *Attitude*, the first show at the Idea Field.



The Idea Field door shows its industrial roots.

Idea Field is to always be on the cutting edge of new artistic trends.

For their opening show, Lin and Wang chose works by dozens of leading Chinese contemporary artists, including Zhang Xiaogang, Yang Maoyuan and Xiao Yu, all who have won honor and fame overseas. The exhibition was loosely organized into seven parts: painting, sculpture, installation, photography, video art, architecture and a short play.

"These artists have had opportunities to get known in the West and become heroes in their small circle, but most Chinese know little about them and their work," said Lin.

He added, "We're responsible to our art and our peers and to China, to show the public that this is what our artists have been doing since Xu Beihong — working and experiencing and incorporating different forms of Chinese history and culture."

Lin has made a career of building bridges for cultural exchange. In 1992, he founded the Other Shore Arts and Education Institute, a non-profit organization that sponsors Chinese artists to hold exhibitions in the US.

After he returned to China in the mid-1990s, Lin grew interested in supporting Chinese contemporary arts. He has organized a series of exhibitions including *About Me — Chinese Experimental Photography* in Shanghai in 2000. Next, he said, he is working on a big project that has been in the planning for five years.

According to Lin, "Our goal is make the arts accessible to all Chinese, to give everyone an opportunity to connect with the arts. But the most effective way we have to do that is to back artists in creating more outstanding works."

## Artistic upgrades

Before Chuangku took over the old factory in 2001, Kunming was a city that drew few artists because of its relatively art-ignorant populace. Fang Lijun, a painter who used to live in Songzhuang,

the well-known Beijing arts village, said, "Chuangku's presence downtown helped change the whole cultural image of Kunming."

Lin seems to have different ideas for the Idea Field. Despite its out-of-the-way location, he insisted the complex remain at its original address. "Location has no connection with public attention — you'd never think of moving the Great Wall to downtown since so many people want to see it. The most important thing is that the building itself announces that it has a strong identity as an open workshop and serves as a beacon for contemporary art," he said.

At the same time, Lin sees potential in the area around the Idea Field. After setting up a space devoted to the creation, education on and exchange of contemporary art, he dreams of building a lasting Idea community. That would entail changing the workshop into a high-profile destination for tourists, local residents and artists.

All money raised for such a project, he said, would come from non-governmental sources at present. The good news is that they have received interest from companies about sponsorship. "But of course we hope to get some government funds," Lin conceded, "though I think that's only a matter of time."

## New Year Show Not Sheepish

By Qiao Luqiang

Spring Festival fever hit the Soka Art Center last week with Saturday's opening of the group exhibition entitled *Chinese New Year Brings Happiness and Fortune*. The show features over 26 works, including oil paintings, mixed media, prints and sculptures by 20 Chinese artists of different ages and varied backgrounds.

Among the artists highlighted is Sun Taiyun, one of the first generation of Chinese artists to have studied oil painting in Russia in the 1930s. Sun's work, with a vibrant, racy style, clearly stands apart from that of artists trained in France and Japan in that same era.

Another focus of this group exhibition is female artists and their work. The paintings of Li Jiangfeng convey feminine feelings through harmonious colors and gentle, elegant lines. The painter Li Linying prefers an abstract style to investigate women's issues in Chinese society.

Birds are the favored subject of Wang Xiangming, artist and teacher in the Fine Arts Department of Shanghai Normal University. Wang uses birds to convey his personal feelings and to address the topic of the deteriorating environment. However, in his work *Toward the Orient*, the bird is no longer an object to be pitied, but an ambassador, together with a western figure, of culture exchange.

The work of Huang Xingyu, a child of the 1970s, stands out



Toward the Orient by Wang Xiangming

from the rest. Unlike many other young artists in China, Huang's art shows more concern with addressing social problems than his personal feelings. In his mixed-media work *Origin*, ugly buildings and concrete constructions make up the bottom, while the middle shows white fog rising from the man-made monstrosities into the blue air at the top.

**Where:** Soka Art (Beijing) Center, north end of East Silk Street, Chaoyang District, Beijing

**When:** January 18th to February 16th, 2003

**Phone:** 8561 9356

**Photos by Zhuang Jian**



Origin by Huang Xingyu

## Cross-Cultural Calligraphy and Painting

By Dong Nan

An exhibition of calligraphy and painting works by Deng Yu and Deng Ning, entitled *Discovering Sweet Fragrances*, was a hit when it toured Tokyo and Niigata, Japan, last month. The show was sponsored by the China-Japan Friendship Association, Beijing Youth Daily Press and The Asahi Shimbun Company of Japan, and co-sponsored by Japan Dentsu Inc. and Nippon Design Center.

Deng Yu and Deng Ning, brothers and graduates of the College of Fine Arts of Tsinghua University, have both studied calligraphy and painting since childhood.

The exhibition showed a large number of the brothers' calligraphy works and paintings. The Dengs' calligraphy is done in regular, running seal and official scripts, with a polished yet natural look. "They have used their own strength, feelings and intelligence to create works of art that follow in the footsteps of the times," said Shao Dazhen, art critic and director of the China Fine Arts Research Committee.



Charm by Deng Ning

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## Talking Heads



Jiang Kun (center) in Bright Spring Melodies

## Now It's Our Turn

By Wang Chunzhu

Although Ballet Internationale first arrived in Beijing in December last year, local dance fans were now able to see the American troupe perform until they had wrapped up their China tour of Shanghai, Ningbo, Changsha and Wuhan. Finally, after a month and a half of waiting, a Beijing audience sat for a dazzling and erotic performance of *A Thousand and One Nights* this Monday night at the Nationality Cultural Palace Theater.

Founded in 1973, Ballet Internationale is non-profit arts organization based in the US state of Indiana. The troupe includes some of the world's finest dancers, a stable of top teachers, artistic directors and choreographers. Artistic Director Eldar Aliev is credited with transforming Indiana's only professional ballet company into an internationally acclaimed ensemble.

The ballet of *A Thousand and One Nights* is a distillation of the basic themes and stories from the mythical tale. Dressed in elaborate Arabia-inspired garb, the dancers' every pirouette and jump showed the high professional level of the troupe. Their inspired performance was rewarded with deafening applause from the audience during and after the show.

*A Thousand and One Nights* will end its run this Saturday, but the following two nights Ballet Internationale will remain at the Nationality Cultural Palace to perform of one act from *Carmen* and *Russian Treasures*, which will include *Dying Swan*, *Fairy Doll* and *Carnival In Venice*.



Photo by Huang Liang

By Wang Chunzhu

After staging 100 performances around China, the cast of the cross-talk play *Bright Spring Melodies* returned to Beijing this month, giving four shows from last Wednesday to last Saturday at the Nationality Cultural Palace Theater.

*Bright Spring Melodies* is an innovative play that tells the history of cross talk, or *xiangsheng*, a traditional Chinese comedic performance style, from the late Qing Dynasty to today.

"The essence of cross-talk is language," Jiang Kun told the audience during the last act of the show, "the current development of cross-talk is not that satisfactory, but we're still optimistic."

From the reactions of the audience, cross-talk still can directly hit the public's funny bone. When Jiang Kun and Zhao

Shizhong, two leading figures in cross-talk, presented a traditional cross-talk performance in Act one, the audience burst into almost constant laughter.

The play then moved to the Cultural Revolution period, during which cross-talk was completely banned, striking a sadder note. The mood shifted to disappointment when four pairs of "robot" cross-talkers (acted by young cross-talkers) were introduced as the latest invention of modern society. These stiff performers did far more singing and wild gesturing than pure talking, directly addressing the struggles of the traditional art of cross-talk in the context of the modern entertainment market.

Yet there is hope, as through drama and film were incorporated in the play, it was the cross-talk that really drew the audience's attention.



By Jenny Wang

Renowned violinist Lu Siqing gave a concert Saturday night at the Century Theatre. Lu, who has been named 2003 emissary of *Beijing Youth Daily*, delighted the audience with his virtuoso performance, performed on a 1742 Guarneri violin loaned to Lu by the Stradivari Society.

Lu became the first Asian violinist to win the gold prize at the Paganini International Violin Competition, in

1987 at the age 18.

The pieces played by Lu ranged from *Spring and Summer*, from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*, to the *Butterfly Lovers' Violin Concerto*, by He Zhanhao and Chen Gang, to Tchaikovsky's *Violin Concerto in D major*.

"It's so great to be here," Lu told the media after the concert, "this concert's like a bridge, and the distance between me and my audience is shortened through music."

Photo by Lu Beifeng

## A Decade of Tunes

By Wang Chunzhu

Pop fans were excited and taxi drivers apprehensive last weekend about the Tenth China Music Chart Awards held last Friday and Saturday nights in the Capital Gymnasium. Thousands of people showed up to watch their favorite pop singers celebrate the tenth anniversary of China's music charts, leading to serious traffic jams around the venue.

However, on Friday night, the audience was surprisingly icy towards the assembled stars. They sat nearly silent during the performances of several domestic singers. Finally, the crowd erupted into their first cheers and screams for A Do, a Singaporean singer who turned up in the middle of the event as a special guest.



Han Hong wows the crowd with the power of her vocals.

Equally well received was Han Hong, who was named the most popular female singer at the end of the show.

## WORLDWIDE



Jack Nicholson and Nicole Kidman in the 60th Golden Globe Awards

### Golden Globes Lend Glow to US Box Office

The new family comedy *Kangaroo Jack* conquered the holiday box office in North America on Monday, grossing almost \$22 million in its first weekend, and Golden Globe victories were expected to boost films like *Chicago* and *The Hours*.

*Chicago* snapped up three Golden Globes on Sunday, while *The Hours*, *Adaptation*, *About Schmidt* and *Gangs of New York* each took home a pair. The Globes, handed out by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, are a closely watched barometer of the industry's ultimate prize, the Academy Awards.

(Reuters)



Johnny Hallyday (left) in Love Me

### French Rocker Hallyday Shows Promise as Thesp

Veteran Gallic rocker Johnny Hallyday scooped France's Prix Jean Gabin for most promising actor Monday, 48 years after his first big-screen role in *Les Diaboliques*.

France's highest-earning pop star, who will be 60 this year, beat a host of younger rivals for the honor. He has appeared in some 30 movies, often as himself, stretching back to 1955. However, recently he has tackled more substantial roles.

Hallyday starred opposite Sandrine Kilberlain in Laetitia Masson's critically panned 2000 *Love Me*, and opposite Jean Rochefort in Patrice Leconte's more warmly received *The Man on the Train* (2002). (Reuters)

### Brit TV Sits Down with Jackson

Pop star Michael Jackson will give an exclusive interview to journalist Martin Bashir on British commercial broadcaster ITV's *Tonight* show in a bid to repair

his crumbling reputation.

The 90-minute special, *Living With Michael Jackson*, will air next month. It promises to be revealing: the star has agreed not to set limits on the questions Bashir may ask.

Bashir has done exclusive interviews with high-profile people including the late Princess Diana, her former butler Paul Burrell and President George Bush. (Variety)



Madonna performs in Berlin

### Madonna to Guest Star on Will & Grace

Madonna will guest star on NBC's *Will & Grace* later this year, in her first appearance on a TV series.

The 44-year-old pop star will appear during the sweeps ratings period in May, but no other details about the episode have been made available.

Madonna has been focusing on her acting career lately, collaborating with husband Guy Ritchie for the box office flop *Swept Away* and starring on the London stage in *Up for Grabs* in 2002. She also had a small role in the recent James Bond movie *Die Another Day*. (AP)

### Robbie Williams Says Music Piracy Is 'Great'

British pop star Robbie Williams shocked attendees at music industry confab Mideem by declaring piracy a good idea.

"I think it's great, really I do," Williams said at a press conference. "There's nothing anyone can do about it. I'm sure my record label would hate me saying it, and my management and accountants."

In the past, Williams has supported moves to prevent the illegal downloading of music. He signed a petition in July 2000 that called on the European Union Copyright Directive to allow artists to use technology to protect their work and to stop Net piracy. (Variety)



Robbie Williams

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Photos provided by Tupperware

## Party in Your Pantry

By Huang Lisha

Tired of fighting kitchen chaos? Does your refrigerator smell of decay? The solution to both these problems could lie in an invention of the 1950's - Tupperware.

Despite its out-of-the-way location, the Tupperware specialty store in Zhongguancun still attracts many customers. Store manager Mr. Xie says that Tupperware products are made of toxin-free plastic and seal airtight, guaranteeing they can keep food fresh for a long time.

Xie's store is crammed with containers for use in and out of the kitchen of all shapes and sizes.



Ice tray, 96 yuan

A transparent cereal receptacle (208 yuan) can hold 13 cups (3.1 liters) of your morning favorite and allows you to see how much is left at a glance. Its virtually airtight seal makes staleness a worry of the past. Another

clever product is a pitcher (58 yuan) that features a perfectly-angled spout that eliminates messy drips.

Other containers and receptacles sure to catch the eye are a super-sized pitcher (98 yuan) with a large, comfortable handle that ensures safe, controlled pouring, even when the pitcher is full. Oval containers (502 yuan for a set of 11) are ideal for organizing in tight spaces and offer a solution for storing dry foods, such as pasta, cereal, beans, rice and sugar.

**Where:** No. 12, Zhongguancun Nandajie, Haidian District **Open:** 9 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6219 0625

## Smells Like Free Spirit

By Huang Lisha

A great way to unwind from a long day is to go home, light a scented candle and enjoy the pleasures of aromatherapy. Sunflower, a store that specializes in aromatherapy products, is certain to have just the right oils and other goods to make your home smell nice and free your mind of worries.

Sunflower offers a wide array of products in three main categories - scented candles, aromatherapy lights, and aromatherapy oil. The store's candles (20 yuan) are unusual because they are mostly transparent, almost like crystal, except for colored areas of wax made to look like fruit.

The manager of the store, Miss Zhang, says, "Most people

just know that aromatherapy products smell good, but the fumes they give off can also get rid of bacteria in the air, which is beneficial to health."

Cleaning the air this way is very easy. Lighting one aromatherapy light (300 yuan) for one hour will keep a room's air clean for six hours. These lights come in various shapes, such as moons and flowers, and are as easy to use as a normal lamp. Simply plugging them in is all it takes to heat the aromatic oil inside the lamp, which escapes through a hole at the top.

Aromatherapy has become popular worldwide as a way to relax and restore one's energy. Sunflower offers dozens of different all-natural aromatherapy oils, all imported from Germany. Miss Zhang recom-



Aromatherapy candles, 20 yuan each

Photo by Cui Hao

mends rose oil (138 yuan per bottle): "It takes 1,000 roses to produce just one drop of this kind of oil. It is ideal for massage or for people who want to

lose weight."

**Where:** No. 2090, No. 26, Anzhenxili, Chaoyang District **Open:** 9 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 8767 7292

## Retro Amusement

By Yu Yang

Traditional toys are a good idea for Spring Festival gifts for people with a taste for fun or an interest in Beijing's past.

Tang Qiliang, 85, is one of a disappearing breed. This skilled craftsman molds, shapes and designs toys that have become synonymous with the Tang family name. He is a local celebrity, known as "Toy Tang" or "Flannel Tang" for his trademark flannel toys. Tang's works have been displayed and collected by some exhibition centers like the China Art Gallery and the Capital Museum.

Today, artists like Tang are rare and the traditional toy trade is dying out. Fortunately, Tang's youngest daughter, Tang Yujie, shares her father's vision. On January 8, she opened a family-run toy store, Shengtangxuan, on Guozijian Street in one of the oldest areas of Beijing. The shop is an excellent showcase not only for the works of her family, but also those of other old-school craftsmen.

Tang Yujie makes many of the toys in the store and can tell customers the stories behind each item. She is especially proud of her family's carriages and horses, for which her father is famous.

One of the pieces handmade by the Tangs is a Qing-era official's horse-drawn carriage. The cart is made of wood and held together with wooden pegs, while the cover is cardboard covered with cloth.



Self-righting official doll, 50 yuan

Characters reading, "This cart will go for thousands of miles a day," are printed on one side and on the other, "The guests and horse will be safe."

The carriage comes with a horse made of cloth-covered paper-mache with wooden legs and clay feet.



Afu doll, 100 yuan

Another highlight is a golden foal, a common toy in old Beijing nearly lost in modern times. It too is made mostly from papier-mache with wooden legs and feet, with play treasure made of clay. On the foal's flanks are paper copies of old coins. In ancient China, a golden foal carrying "golden treasure" was a popular symbol of good luck.

Beijing's history lives on in many other pieces, such as a clay figurine of a mythical hare riding a tiger, and a toy monkey made of cicada shells and magnolia buds. Another oldie-but-goodie are animals mounted on hinged sticks - manipulating the sticks can make the toys look like they are running.

**Where:** No. 38, Guozijian, Dongcheng District **Open:** 9 am - 7 pm **Tel:** 6400 2303



Miniature old Beijing teahouse, 30,000 yuan

Photos by Peng Jianwei

## Getting the Goods on Harry Potter

By Salinda

Harry Potter must have powerful magic indeed - the book and movie-based franchise has managed to enthrall millions in China's fickle entertainment market. To tap in on domestic Potter mania, and to promote today's opening of the second film in the series, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, the China Film theater in Xijiekou has opened a small store peddling nothing but Harry-based goods.

The shop offers over 200 products, including clothes, stationary sets, toys and books. What makes them unusual is that all the goods are actually licensed.

Customers going for the Harry Potter look can buy a robe and cap set (328 yuan), available in black, blue and purple, or his famed maroon and gold striped wool scarf (80 yuan).

Young Potter lovers will get

a kick out of Lego sets representing various scenes and places from the film, which range in price from 27 to 988 yuan. Fans of all ages can "Harry-ize" their rooms with limited-edition film posters that fetch up to several thousand yuan, or with a stuffed version of Potter's pet owl. Other products bearing Harry Potter's magic touch include clocks, watches, bags, jeans and T-shirts.

**Where:** No. 25, Xijiekou Waidajie, Xicheng District **Open:** 9 am - 9 pm **Tel:** 6223 0207



Photo by Peng Jianwei

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Photos provided by Kyoran Japanese Restaurant at Beijing Hotel

# Getting the Best of Burdock

**By Wenlong**  
You can't judge a root by its cover. Underneath the humble exterior of the burdock (*niupang*) is a flesh considered very healthy because of its high fiber, low-calorie content. The plant's root is a good source of potassium and other nutrients, but what sets it apart is its unusually high insulin count. This homely vegetable can clear the blood, counter water retention, stimulate digestion and aid kidney, liver and gallbladder function. Burdock is also believed to be beneficial for skin problems, wound healing, eczema, and gout. Since last October, increasing numbers of restaurants in the capital have been pushing dishes made with burdock. Burdock's stalk, fruit, root and leaves can all be used in cooking. The vegetable is a favorite



Fresh burdock salad

among the Japanese and Koreans and a common ingredient in their cuisines. The meat of the burdock is sweet, nutty, delicate and crunchy. Although its dark, bark-like skin looks thick, it is actually paper-thin and can be scraped away with a fingernail or light scrubbing. The stalks, cut before the flowers have opened and stripped of their

rind, have a delicate flavor when boiled, similar to asparagus. They also make a pleasant salad, served raw with oil and vinegar. **Burdock Recipe** When starting out cooking this root, it may be best to start with the tried and true. Here is Japan's most common burdock dish - *kimpi-ra gobo*. 500 grams (1 pound) burdock 250 grams carrots 1-3 Thai hot peppers 2 tablespoons sugar 3-4 tablespoons soy sauce Sesame seeds, to taste 1-2 tablespoons oil **Procedure:** 1. Rub burdock with the back of a knife to remove skin. Cut into 1 to 1/2 inch lengths and then slice into matchstick-sized pieces. Let soak in cold water for several minutes and drain. 2. Peel and cut carrots into matchstick-sized pieces. 3. Cut off top of hot peppers and remove seeds. Slice into thin rounds. 4. Heat oil in frying pan or wok and add burdock and carrot. Stir-fry over high heat for about three minutes. 5. Add sugar and soy sauce. Sprinkle with hot pepper and sesame seeds. Continue to cook until liquid is gone, stirring frequently. **Selection Tips** If possible, find roots that look and smell freshly-dug. This means the roots are turgid, not limp or dried out, and a sniff where you scrape a fingernail over the surface should yield a sweet, earthy aroma. However, if you can only find limp burdock, the taste will still be good and turgidity will return if you soak the slices in cold water.



## Tujia Tastes to Tickle Your Fancy

The Shizhongtang restaurant, which opened in June, is the first ethnic Tujia-style restaurant in the city. The dishes are prepared by Tujia chefs in strict accordance with the methods they use in their hometowns in Youyang and Xiushan counties of Sichuan Province. The name of its signature dishes and spirit are hidden in the name of the restaurant - *tang* refers to the cooking pot, *zhong* means liquor glass and *shi* means eat. One dish favored by the owner is Sichuan style chicken giblets served in an iron pot (*chuanwei jizaguo*, 48 yuan), large enough to satisfy three people. Another exotic dish is ox and goat penis stewed with medicinal herbs (*shiquandabuguo*), which is believed to nourish the blood and increases virility. This hot and spicy Viagra alternative goes for a potent 158 yuan. The restaurant's special red spirit, *hongpao-tai*, is made from sorghum and sells for 5 yuan per 50 grams. The liquor is very strong, but with a soft taste. **Add:** No. 177 Beituchenglu Xijie, Haidian District **Open:** 9 am - 10:30 pm **Tel:** 6203 6867 **Average cost:** about 30 yuan per person

Photos by Zhuang Jian / Liang Zongqin



## Xiaolanjing Hubei-style Restaurant

**By Wenlong**  
This restaurant is the first Beijing venture of the Xiaolanjing catering group, which hails from central China's Hubei province. The eatery is located near the Dazhongsi (Big Bell Temple) on the south side of the North Third Ring Road. Xiaolanjing cooks up authentic Hubei cuisine at moderate prices. The main room can hold up to 90 diners and the dozens of separate rooms on the second floor can accommodate another 100 or so. While nicely-folded napkins and fake flowers on the table are inviting, they are whisked away quickly by the over-efficient waitstaff, to be replaced by flimsy paper tissues. Otherwise, the service is fine. Steamed blunt-snout bream (*qingzheng wuchang yu*), goes for 44 yuan per kilogram. This normally simple dish displays the level of expertise of Xiaolanjing's kitchen - the fish is carefully shaped to look like a whale, the restaurant's namesake. The restaurant also serves up other seafood specialties, including deluxe items like abalone and shark fin. **Add:** No. 16 Beisanhuan Xilu, Haidian District **Open:** 10:30 am - 2 pm; 5:30 pm - 9:30 pm **Tel:** 6214 0808, 6214 0909 **Average cost:** 50 yuan per person



## Laosunja Restaurant

**By Wenlong**  
This is one of the few restaurants in the city that serves up authentic Muslim-style *paomo*, a delicious and filling dish of pieces of steamed bun soaked in beef or lamb soup. Laosunja is run by a catering group from Xi'an that has enjoyed an outstanding reputation for the quality of its *paomo* in that city, the home of the dish, since 1898. This popularity of this two-story restaurant in Haidian is testimony to the universal appeal of *paomo*. The restaurant's air of authenticity is supported by a replica of a Qin dynasty terra-cotta warrior guarding the door. The *paomo* comes in four versions, all priced at 12 yuan per bowl. The differences among the versions is the amount of soup included. In *kou tang*, just enough soup is added to all be absorbed by the bread, while in the *shui wei cheng* version, pieces of the bun will float on top of the broth. Customers that like to do it themselves can have their bun come separately and tear it up on their own. No matter how it is ordered, one bowl of *paomo* is enough to fill all but the most hungry diners, making it a good choice for lunch or for warming up on a cold winter day. **Add:** No. 40 Beisanhuan Zhonglu, Haidian District **Open:** 11 am - 10 pm **Tel:** 6202 5775 **Average cost:** 18 yuan per person

## Dining Out

**Jianguo Hotel**  
Mushroom promotion  
During mushroom season, executive chef Michel proudly presents gastronomic delights including pan-fried goose liver on a bed of forest mushrooms in rosemary herbs sauce and snails and frogs' legs fricassee with pan-fried garlic and parsley flavored mushrooms. **When:** January 6 - 31 **Where:** Justine's, Jianguo Hotel **Tel:** 6500 2233 ext. 8039  
**Rosedale Hotel & Suites Beijing**  
New a la carte menu  
Café California features a new a la carte menu of Chinese and dim sum dishes and a classic international selection of snacks, salads, light meals and hot entrees. Sample such tasty specials as steamed ox tripe with black pepper, fried rice noodles with sliced beef, poached chicken with ginger sauce and sautéed diced chicken and peanuts. **Where:** Rosedale Hotel & Suites Beijing, No. 8 Jiangtai West Road, Chaoyang District **Tel:** 6436 2288 ext. 2617  
**The St. Regis Beijing**  
New a la carte menu available  
The Astor Grill is one of Beijing's premier places for lunch, dinner, small parties or just a drink. New a la carte menu available. Menu designed by Chef Tony Zhang. **Where:** Astor Grill Restaurant, The St. Regis Beijing. **Tel:** 6460 6688 ext. 2637  
**Sui Yuan Restaurant Hilton Beijing**  
Unlimited dim sum for 68 yuan  
The Sui Yuan restaurant introduces delightful dim sum. Served steamed or fried, these mouth-watering pouches are filled with perfectly seasoned beef, chicken or seafood. Choose as many items as you like from the special dim sum lunch menu for 68 yuan plus 15 percent surcharge. **When:** 11:30 am - 14:30 pm weekdays **Tel:** 6466 2288  
**Java restaurant**  
Authentic Indonesian cuisine  
This new Indonesian restaurant, offering a wide variety of food at reasonable prices, opened at the end of last year. Dishes and décor have a distinctive Indonesian feel. **When:** Daily 7:30 am - 11 pm **Where:** Java, second floor, Comfort Inn & Suites Hotel, No. 4 Gongti Beilu **Tel:** 8523 5395/6  
**Hotel New Otani Changfugong**  
Weekend seafood buffet fair  
Get your seafood fix at the weekend seafood buffet every Friday dinner, Saturday and Sunday lunch and dinner. Buffet includes lobster, live shrimp, raw oysters, crab, salmon and various shellfish, with free local beer and soft drinks. **When:** 5:30 pm - 9:30 pm **Where:** Coffee Shop, Hotel New Otani Changfugong, No. 26 Jianguomenwai Avenue **Tel:** 6512 5555 ext. 1036 **Cost:** 188 yuan plus 15 percent service charge

## Chinese Chicken Salad

**By Wesley Lei**  
Though cravings tend to run to hot foods in winter, a tasty salad can still satisfy unlike anything else this time of year. Plus, salads are an effective way to get one's vitamins to stave off those late winter colds. **Ingredients** Soy-Sesame Dressing (see below) Mixed salad greens, about 500 grams (try to avoid iceberg lettuce), washed, drained and broken into bite-size pieces 2 cups shredded, cooked chicken 1 small carrot, shredded 1/3 cup chopped green onions and tops 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro **Preparation** Prepare Soy-Sesame Dressing: Combine 1/4 cup distilled white vinegar, 3 tablespoons naturally brewed soy sauce, 1 tablespoon each vegetable oil and sesame oil and 2 teaspoons sugar in small bowl, stirring until sugar dissolves. Combine salad greens, chicken, carrot, green onions and cilantro in large serving bowl; pour dressing over mixture and toss together to coat all pieces well. Serve immediately. Makes six servings.

## Ham, Egg and Potato Supper Skillet

Why limit some of your favorite things to only breakfast? This recipe takes some morning standards and puts them together into a simple dish the whole family will love anytime. **Ingredients** 1 tablespoon cooking oil 3 cups shredded potatoes 1 1/2 cups diced cooked ham 6 beaten eggs 1/3 cup water 3/4 cup shredded cheese, preferably mild cheddar Salt, pepper and spices to taste **Preparation** Coat a large nonstick skillet with oil; heat over medium heat. Spread potatoes evenly in bottom of skillet. Cover and cook 6 to 8 minutes or until potatoes are tender, stirring once. Stir in ham. In medium bowl combine eggs and water; pour over ham and potato mixture. Cook, uncovered, just until eggs are set, turning mixture occasionally with a wide spatula. Sprinkle with cheese. **Total time:** 20 minutes **Nutrition** 470 Calories, 28g Fat, 10g Saturated Fat, 40mg Cholesterol, 990mg Sodium, 34g Carbohydrates, 23g Protein, 2g Fiber Makes four servings.



## Cross-talk History

Top cross-talk artists led by Jiang Kun bring this form of comic dialogue to the stage. The performance, Bright Spring Melodies, tells the stories of cross-talk performers of different ages, from the late Qing Dynasty to the present day. From generation to generation, cross-talkers saw their status rising from being the most lowbrow performers on the streets.

The six act performance sketches common people' life across a century in China. It draws on many historical anecdotes from the late Qing Dynasty, the war with Japan, liberation in 1949, the Cultural Revolution and the open door policy.



**Where:** Poly Theatre **When:** January 26-28, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 50-580 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7674 ext 198

## Movies



Harry Potter and his friend in the chamber

### Harry Potter and The Chamber of Secrets

Directed by Chris Columbus, starring Daniel Radcliffe, Kenneth Branagh, Emma Watson, Rupert Grint, John Cleese and David Bradley. The new film continues to tell the miraculous adventures of Harry Potter and his friends. Chinese with English subtitles.

**Where:** local cinemas **When:** January 24

### Hero

Directed by Zhang Yimou, starring Jet Li, Chen Daoming, Zhang Manyu, Tony Lng and Zhang Ziyi. At the height of China's warring states period, the Kingdom of Qin is the most determined to dominate. The Qin Emperor has long been the target of assassins from the six other states.

There are three legendary assassins, Broken Sword, Flying Snow and Sky and the Emperor promises great power to anyone who can defeat the three. The enigmatic county sheriff, Nameless, defeats the three assassins at last. Sitting only ten paces from Nameless, the Emperor is impatient to hear his story... Chinese with English subtitles.

**Where:** Cherry Lane Movies, 21 Liangmaqiao Lu **When:** January 29-30, 8 pm **Admission:** 40 yuan **Tel:** 6430 1398 **Email:** michael@cherrylanemovies.com.cn

### The Last Kiss

This film, a big hit in Italy, pokes fun at those dreading the inevitable onset of maturity and responsibilities. In this tale, the prospect of parenthood brings ecstasy, panic and youthful lust to the new mother, father and grandmother. Staring Stefania Sandrelli, an icon of Italian cinema. Written and directed by Gabriele Muccino. Italian with English subtitles.

**Where:** Italian Embassy Cultural Office **When:** January 30, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6532 2187

### Stranger Than Paradise

Directed by Jim Jarmusch. In search of a happy life, a group of young people travel to Florida. English with Chinese subtitles.

**Where:** Space for Imagination, 5 Xiwangzhuang Haidian **When:** January 25, 7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6279 1280

## Lecture

### Learn Paper Cutting for Chinese New Year Decorations

Visit artist Liu Ren and her paper-cut decorated courtyard and paper-cut gallery in her courtyard in a small lane in Xidan. Liu Ren teaches how to cut red paper into traditional holiday designs.

**Where:** Meet at the parking lot of Times Square on the southeast corner of the Xidan intersection at Chang'an Avenue **When:** January 25, 2:30-4 pm **Admission:** adults 30 yuan, students 20 yuan **Tel:** 8851 4913



It takes time to learn how to do the cool stuff

## Sports

### Spring Valley Loop

This walk will follow a stream along a quiet valley and pass a small village. The top of the valley crosses the border of three counties (Changping, Yanqing and Huairou). Parts of the Great Wall are on the ridge here. If it is a clear day you will be able to see other parts of the Great Wall in the distance as well as the mountains, villages and farmland in the surrounding counties. We will take one of the trails down through a different valley, passing another neat little village before returning to the starting point.

**Where:** Huairou, north of Beijing **When:** January 26, 8:30 am outside Starbucks at Lido Hotel, 9 am at Capital Paradise main gate, come back at 4:30-5 pm **Admission:** adults 150 yuan, children 100 yuan **Tel:** 13701 003694 **Email:** bjhikers@yahoo.co.uk

## Stage



Actor Xia Xiaohu with actress Wangchong

### Shadows on the Fence Walls

Performed by China National Opera and Dance Theatre. The dance is based on two TV series, *Fence, Woman and Dog*, and *Well-pulley, Woman and Well*. It tells of the two marriages of one village woman and how she grows from a common village girl to an independent woman. Composer is Xu Peidong.

**Where:** Tianqiao Theatre, 30 Beiwailu, Xuanwu **When:** January 27-28, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-280 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7673 ext 508

### Online Love

A comedy, based on *Cuihua Soured Pickle Dish*. A boy wants to look for a girl to share his apartment with, so he issues information on the Internet. Unexpectedly two boys come...

**Where:** Poly Theatre **When:** January 30, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 160-480 yuan **Tel:** 6828 7750 ext 198

### Series of Stratagems

Performed by Beijing Opera Theatre, Shang Changrong, Shi Xiaoliang, Tan Zhengyan and Wanglijun will be on stage.

**Where:** Chang'an Grand Theatre, 7 Jianguonei Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** January 27, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 60-180 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7750 ext 508

### Field Swan

This is a children's story, starring Zhang Yanlin, Lu Guirong, Wang Xiaochan, An Dahan, Yang Xiangguo, Zhang Bing, Wang Jingwen, Hu Jinping and Guo Xiuyun and performed by Hebei Opera.

**Where:** Chang'an Grand Theatre, 7 Jianguonei Dajie, Dongcheng **When:** January 24, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 60-180 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7750 ext 508

## Exhibitions

### Silk Road Scene

Antiques discovered along the Silk Road and around Tianshan Mountain in Xinjiang are on show. The exhibits include handicrafts made from gold and silver as well as hangings, carvings and unearthened relics. And a special kind of sculpture, Plain Stoneman, which is somewhat like the mysterious

monoliths on Easter Island, is being displayed for the first time.

**Where:** the Museum of Chinese History **When:** till April 15, 8:30 am-4:30 pm **Tel:** 6512 8321

### Mini Delight

A total of 28 Mini Treasures of Chinese cultural relics included in the World Heritage List are on display, to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the signing of the World Heritage pact.

**Where:** the Chinese Revolutionary Museum **When:** till February 29, 9 am-5 pm **Tel:** 6526 3355

### Folk Art

More than 20 traditional Chinese folk works including embroidery, shadow puppets, woodcarving and papercuts from Shannxi, Henan, Shanxi, Shangdong, Anhui and Zhejiang provinces. Also on display are oil paintings by artists who use modern techniques to depict social changes.

**Where:** Qin Gallery, Huaweili Enjio Paradise 1-1E (North of Beijing Curio City) Chaoyang **When:** January 29-February 15, 9:30 am-7 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8779 0461



Shannxi's Shadow

## Parties

### Death Metal

Death Metal (Siwang Jinsu) will perform.

**Where:** Get Lucky, 500 meters east of the south gate of University of International Business and Economics, Chaoyang **When:** November 24, 9 pm **Admission:** adults 40 yuan, students 20 yuan **Tel:** 6429 9109, 6420 4249

### Get Oriented

Oriented hosts the networking event of the month, this time in Latin style with free drinks and snacks for early birds. Colombian band Expression Latina takes over when the name card swapping ends.

**Where:** Latinos, south gate of Chaoyang Park, Chaoyang **When:** January 30, 7-9 pm **Admission:** free **Tel:** 6507 9898

### Super Monday

Take the morning off and come watch the big game at the Gloria Plaza Hotel's Sports City Café. Beijing's Superbowl Bash will feature a fantastic brunch buffet, including coffee, mimosas, prizes and giveaways galore.

**Where:** Sports City Café, Third floor Gloria Plaza Hotel, 2 Jianguomenwai Dajie, Chaoyang **When:** January 27, 9 am-noon **Admission:** 100 yuan, including the buffet, coffee and tea and one cocktail **Tel:** 6515 8855 ext 3349

### Rock

Beautiful Pharmacy (Meihao Yaodian), Ruins (Feixu) and Armory (Junxiesuo) are ready to rock you.

**Where:** Starting bar, opposite the west gate of Beijing Space and Aviation University, Haidian **When:** January 25, 9 pm **Admission:** adults 30 yuan, students 20 yuan **Tel:** 8233 2264

### Add Happy!

Tonight Beautiful Pharmacy perform their jazzy alt-rock, and on Saturday Ak47 will bring their full rock arsenal. Next Monday, What (Shenme) and Slap (Erguang), two bands from Hebei, play alt-folk and funk up hard rock respectively. They will be joined by avant-garde artist and acrobat Maizi.

**Where:** What, opposite north gate of Business and Economics University, Chaoyang **When:** 9 pm **Admission:** 20 yuan **Tel:** 13910 209249

### Second-Hand Roses and More

Second Hand Roses have made a name for themselves with their peculiar brand of folk rock and their Dongbei humor. See them perform on Saturday. On Sunday Night Hawks (Ye Ying) and Wild Strawberries (Ye Cao-mei) will perform.

**Where:** CD Café, south of Agriculture Exhibition Center, Chaoyang **When:** 9 pm **Admission:** 30 yuan **Tel:** 6501 8877 ext 3032

## Performance



Xi'er makes the best of it

### The White-haired Girl

A ballet adaptation of classic Chinese story *The White Haired Girl* by Shanghai Ballet. Based on a true story, the ballet is about the struggle of a young woman before 1949 in China. She was bullied by her landlord who killed her father. The experience makes her hair turn white. She then goes to hide in a cave for dozens of years until she finally sees the sunlight after liberation.

**Where:** Century Theatre, 49 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** January 24-25, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-580 yuan **Tel:** 6466 4805, 6462 8470



The China National Film Symphony Orchestra

### Film Themes

See film highlights accompanied by their theme music performed live by musicians. The China National Film Symphony Orchestra is ideal for the job as it records music for many of the films. For this concert just before the Spring Festival, they will play familiar tunes from *Pearl Harbour*, *Sound of Music*, *Ghost*, and Chinese films including *Five Shining Stars* and *Five Golden Flowers*.

**Where:** Poly Theatre, 14 Dongzhimen Nandajie, Dongcheng **When:** January 29, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-480 yuan **Tel:** 6567 5049, 8580 3788

## Activities

### Rebuilding Sheng Gu Temple

The Sheng Gu Temple Restoration Project is a non-government, non-profit Chinese organization established to raise money for the reconstruction of the Sheng Gu Temple in Anping, Hebei Province. This organization is unique in that it is the first ever to allow foreigners to manage a project to rebuild a Chinese cultural relic. Now many volunteers are needed.

**Tel:** 6568 2990

**Website:** www.shenggu.org

### Ice World

Ditan Temple hosts probably the grandest of the temple fairs, thanks to its combination of modern and traditional culture. Apart from traditional activities like imperial army parades, folk sports and sales of various goods, there is a grand ice and snow sculpture show in the southeast of Ditan Park. All the sculptures are by artists from Harbin, Heilongjiang Province.

**Where:** Ditan Park, Dongcheng **When:** January 28-February 15 **Tel:** 6427 3127

### Sunday Tango

A group of Tango dancers will meet and learn the sexy and elegant dance from Argentina. Women are invited to wear high heels.

**When:** Sunday, 4:30-7:30 pm **Admission:** 35 yuan

**Email:** beijingtango@yahoo.com



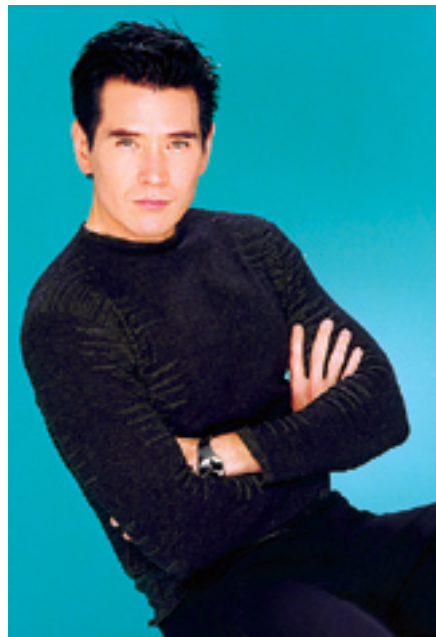
Tango: Music and dance style

## Music

### Extreme Magician and Escape Artist

If you want to test your notions of reality and challenge your definition of sanity, then witness Robert Gallup's extreme magic and deadly escapes.

**Where:** The great hall of the people **When:** January 24-26, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 180-1680 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7674 ext 198



Fei Xiang became a pop idol in 1978

### Kris Phillips—Fei Xiang

Chinese American Fei Xiang or Kris Phillips has been a pop idol since his first appearance in the Chinese mainland in 1978. Now he returns to perform old songs and musical favourites such as *You are Like a Fire in the Winter*.

**Where:** Worker's Gymnasium **When:** January 24, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-580 yuan **Tel:** 8580 3788, 6567 5049

### New Year Concert

The program includes Blue Danube, Radetsky March and The Marriage of Figaro.

**Where:** Nationality Culture Palace Theatre **When:** January 30, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-500 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7674 ext 198

### Cross Over Music

Wang Yong, a rock musician who likes to use a Guzheng, a traditional Chinese instrument, will perform a concert of pop music with his band. The concert will include top Chinese musicians from different backgrounds. As well as the Guzheng, featured instruments include the guitar, bass, lute and drums.

**Where:** Century Theatre **When:** January 30, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-580 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7673 ext 508

### New Year Concert

Performed by Beijing New Air Chamber Band, conducted by Nicholas Smith. Galina Besner will play the piano and Jin Haiyin will play the violin. The program includes Mozart's Concerto in A Minor and Stravinsky's Violin Concerto.

**Where:** Forbidden City Concert Hall **When:** January 25, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 30-280, yuan, and 3040 yuan for VIP seats **Tel:** 6528 7673 ext 508

### Folk Concert

Performed by Ethnic Orchestra of Beijing Song and Dance Troupe.

**Where:** Forbidden City Concert Hall **When:** January 30, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 80-480 yuan, with top tickets going for 4000 yuan **Tel:** 6528 7673 ext 508

### Russian Songs

The Orchestra of Song and Dance Ensemble of the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army is to feature popular music works of the former USSR which were popular in China, including *Night in the Outskirts of Moscow*, *Holy War*, *Little Alley* and *Red Berry Blooms*.

**Where:** Concert Hall of China National Library, Zhongguancun Nandajie **When:** January 29, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 50-280 yuan **Tel:** 8854 5520, 6841 9220

### My Sun Concert

Performed by the Orchestra of Song and Dance Ensemble of the General Political Department of the People's Liberation Army. Program includes *My Sun*, *Nessun Dorma*, *For Art*, *For Love* and more.

**Where:** Concert Hall of China National Library, Zhongguancun Nandajie **When:** January 30, 7:30 pm **Admission:** 40-280 yuan **Tel:** 8854 5520, 6841 9220

We are glad to receive your feedback. We will print employment, language exchange and accommodation info for individuals. Feel free to email us at bjtoday-info@ynet.com or call 6590 2522

By Guo Yuandan



# The Terraces at Yuanyang

By Jerry Ho/Jiaotu  
Photos by Jiaotu

Rice terraces for many westerners epitomize the rural landscape of southern China. The most famous of these terraces are those at Longsheng (龙胜), in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, and at Yuanyang (元阳), in Yunnan. Although both places offer beautiful scenery and countless opportunities for photography buffs, there are important differences between the two.

At Longsheng, irrigation and plowing do not start until May, but at Yuanyang, the terraces are irrigated and crops are grown all through the year, even in winter.

The biggest difference, however, is that Longsheng is well established as a tourist destination, and visitors must pay for admittance into the area, whereas in Yuanyang, there is very little commercial exploitation; the scenery remains natural and free to all visitors.

Yuanyang County lies in the Ailao Mountains in the southeast of Yunnan Province, part of the Honghe Autonomous Prefecture for Yi and Hani nationalities.

The rice terraces are the number one attraction for tourists in Yuanyang. They cover the hills in dense, tidy layers.

Groves of bamboo, huts, ducks swimming in ponds and farmers at work fill out the picture.

With the constantly changing weather, the terraces take on different appearances from one day to the next, often from one hour to the next. On clear days, the water-filled rice paddies reflect the sunlight and the blue of the sky. When it is cloudy, as it frequently is, the fog rolls dramatically around the hills creating an atmosphere of mystery and hidden beauty.

The "sea of clouds" is a frequently seen phenomenon in the area. When locals see the sky full of stars just before dawn, they know it will be another cloudy day in the mountains. Visitors climbing to the top of some smaller hills can enjoy the sight of the clouds, virtually at their feet, flowing over the valley, the terraces and towns like a river.

Local people, mostly belonging to the Hani and Yi minorities, live in thatched or earthen cottages beside the terraces. The area is relatively underdeveloped and most people live their work on the land.

## Getting there and getting around

Overnight buses leave Kunming's Nanyao bus terminal (南窑汽车站) daily for Yuanyang. The 331-kilometer journey takes a little over seven hours. There are more frequent buses to Gejiu (个旧), from where regular buses leave for Yuanyang between 6 am and 2 pm daily.

Yuanyang has two county seats, the old one, Xinjie (新街), at Ailao mountain and the new one, Nansha (南沙), in the Yuan River valley. The two towns are just 28 kilometers apart, but it takes almost one hour to navigate the winding mountain road that separates them. Most buses go to Xinjie, but it is a good idea to check with the driver, as some are headed for Nansha.

Terraces can be seen beside the main roads, particularly around Shengcun and Niujiaozhai villages. There are frequent buses from Xinjie to these

villages, and cars are available for rental from 200 to 400 yuan per day. Taxis, in the form of motorbikes with sidecars, are also an option for getting around.

## Accommodation

There is not a wide range of choices for accommodation in Yuanyang. Standard double rooms cost 40 yuan per person and beds in dormitory rooms cost 15 yuan. Hot water is generally only available in the evening.

## Food

Restaurant food is fresh, cheap, and spicy! There are no western breakfast options, but the local rice noodles are tasty and only 2 yuan a serve. *Pa Pa*, the specialty of the local Hani people, is a delicious sticky rice cake, steamed, dried and finally roasted. Restaurants are usually reliable, in terms of hygiene, but be wary of eating food from roadside snack stalls.

## What to bring

Fog and rain are almost a constant in

Yuanyang, from late autumn through spring. Take water-resistant clothes, especially shoes, essential for scrambling around in rice paddies.

## When to go

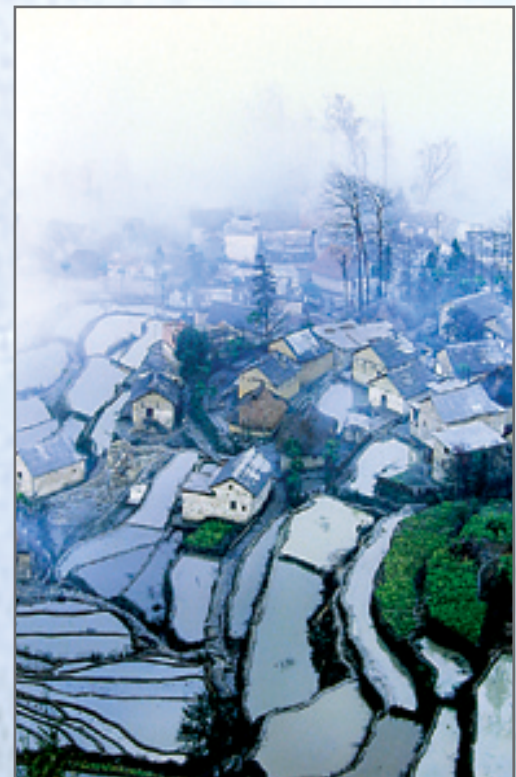
The rice paddies are at their picturesque best from December to March, making the Spring Festival holiday the perfect time to visit.

## Communications

There is mobile phone coverage in Xinjie and Nansha, as well as many of the smaller villages.

## Photography

The terraces and villages of Yuanyang make it a paradise for photographers. The extraordinary and constantly changing light is the icing on the cake. If you are shooting transparencies, it is worth bringing a selection. The saturated color of Fuji Velia or Kodak Ektachrome VS is ideal for those moody shots of fog filled valleys, of which you are sure to come home with several rolls. The slightly less contrasty Fuji Provia will come in hand for those (probably rare) moments when the sun comes out, bathing everything in brilliant light.





# Spring Festival

## Special



EDITOR: LIU FENG DESIGNER: PANG LEI  
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Whoever you are, wherever you go, we at *Beijing Today* offer our very best wishes to you, your family and your friends on the eve of the Year of the Sheep. 2002 may or may not have been a good year, it may have been a time of success or of failure. But now is the time to look ahead, and prepare for a new beginning.

*Beijing Today* shared both happiness and sadness with our readers during the past year, and we hope we can continue to support each other this year. We asked some Beijingers to tell us about their plans for the coming Spring Festival holiday. Following are a selection of their responses.

### Sylvia Lodder

By Sun Ming

I was born in the Netherlands twenty-five years ago. I came to Beijing with my husband and twin sons last November, because we want to learn more of your beautiful country and culture.

Two weeks ago I read an article in *Beijing Today*, from which I knew that foreign women were invited to audition for a cameo role as a concubine in the Beijing Grand View Garden (大观园) at the Honglou Temple Fair during the Spring Festival.

I took this audition and I was chosen with three other foreign women to play the role during the six-day fair. I will play at the first day and the last day, February 1 and 6.

To be the first foreigner to perform Yuan, I feel honored. *Royal Concubine Yuan Paying a Visit to her Parents* has been performed at the fair for six years, but it is the first year that foreign actresses will star in the festive performance. I know the story is from a classical Chinese literary work, *Dream of the Red Chamber*.

I will do my very best to perform Yuan and I hope you will enjoy my performance if you come to see me at the Honglou Temple Fair during the coming Spring Festival.

### Jin Qing, 33, released from Beijing Prison, December 2002

By Su Wei

I will be very busy during the Spring Festival, for I will start my own company in April.

My company will specialize in multimedia and production. I do not want to work for someone else, for a monthly salary of barely 2,000 yuan. I believe my worth is much greater. The company will employ more than ten people, all university graduates.

I like eating lamb kebabs very much. No matter how busy I am, I will find time to make barbecued kebabs. There were many kebab stalls around the streets before I went into prison. But I could not find any using coal when I regained my freedom last year. They all use electricity now.

### Eric Rhodes, 31, Consultant at Xinde Telecom

By Xiao Rong

I will travel to Thailand with my girlfriend between February 7 and 11. Last year I went to Hainan Island for the Spring Festival, but it's too expensive to go there, though the landscape is really wonderful. This time the cost is about US \$1,000, including the airplane ticket.

If I didn't go to Thailand this year, maybe I'll choose Guizhou or Tibet for the Spring Festival plan. Next year, however, I'll stay in Beijing, and perhaps visit the Spring Festival temple fair.

This year I will try to par-

# Make a Wish



Sylvia Lodder



Lü Siqing



Eric Rhodes



Xia Mu

nam war, or the American war, as they prefer it here.

I'm not sure where I'll be for New Year — it will also be Tet, the Vietnamese New Year — and also the year of the goat, my year, so I'm expecting good things next year. I may be at Angkor Wat, in Cambodia, which seems suitably auspicious. Or I may be at the beach! Happy New Year.

### Jessica Wong, postgraduate, Beijing Normal University

By Zhao Hongyi

I am now in my second year of postgraduate study. I also take a part-time job because I want to gain experience, and earn some money.

I will fly home to see my parents during Spring Festival, and come back to Beijing, to my job, as soon as the four-day holiday is over.

2003 is an important year in my studying career. I have to read as much as possible because I know I won't have so much time to study on the campus; think as much as possible, cause I have to prepare for the graduation thesis, and work hard, as much as possible.

Boyfriend? No, I don't have one. Neither do I want to have one! I am too busy studying. But I hope all boys and girls can make their matches in the New Year, and the following years.

### Darrel Jenks, director of the American Center for Educational Exchange

By Xiao Rong

I'll stay in Beijing for the Spring Festival, as it will be the best time of the year to stay here when most people leave Beijing for traveling.

It's a good chance for me to learn more about China's folk culture by participating in various activities like temple fairs. I can also taste lots of delicious local food and drink excellent local alcohols.

Another important Spring Festival plan is the rehearsal of our jazz band, which is named Toono, a Mongolian word meaning "skylight." We will focus on the rehearsal of some odd-time signatures that are different from the routine jazz rhythms.

As for my plan in 2003, I would like to devote more to Sino-US cultural exchanges from which both foreign children living in Beijing and local Chinese children can benefit a lot.

The cultural exchange plan is triggered by the slow improvement of Chinese language of my 15-year-old daughter and 13-year-old son who are both studying at the Beijing Shunyi International School. I think it's my fault for not having instructed them more to learn about Chinese traditional culture.

The cultural exchange plan will mainly include environmental protection activities like waste recycling and other kinds of lectures. My jazz band will also visit some local schools or universities to give performances.

### Song Degong, residential compound security guard

By Zhao Hongyi

I have been a guard at this compound for thirteen years, and I have never had a sense of holiday. As usual, I'll stay here, in Beijing, in this compound.

My home is in the countryside in Hebei province, not far away from Beijing, straight down south and six hours by bus. I have no Beijing citizenship, even now.

I tried to go back home dur-

ing the holidays in the first seven years. I was alone then here, I had to see my wife and children then and give them the money for the whole year's spending. Six years ago, my wife came to Beijing, and share my "happy" life here.

Now, it's all right. My wife came here six years ago, and we have a two-room apartment in this residential compound, though quite small. My children and their families used to come to see us at Spring Festival, we like to watch TV and wander on Beijing's streets during the holidays. They might come again this year, but I am not sure.

Wishes for the New Year? I want to go back home. I want to have sunshine and fresh air there. Beijing is too dirty. It damaged my health.

I wish all "get rich in the New Year," particularly my countryside fellows. Comparatively, I am better off than they.

### Thomas Kloubert, 27, freelance photographer, raised in Beijing

By Su Wei

I am certain to have dumping on the Eve of the Spring Festival with hot pepper oil and Labacu (vinegar in which heads of garlic are put on the eighth day of the twelfth lunar month). The stuffing must be the one with pork and green onions. I like making the stuffing — using chopsticks to mix clockwise. When I taste the raw stuffing I think it is much more tasty than the boiled dumplings.

I want to set off firecrackers, but it is not allowed. When I was a child, I was a little crazy about setting off firecrackers. My friends and I used to set off the violent ones, such as the double-kicks. We either fought with each other in groups, throwing crackers, or set off the inside dynamites after taking off the covers.

My sweater once got burned when my friend and I set off firecrackers. I never thought that I could also be hurt. My only fear was that my parents would scold me for the burnt sweater. I hid the sweater somewhere and the following day, I went out setting off firecrackers again. Now I think it is good to have such regulations. But the festival seems to lose something of its atmosphere.

### Xia Mu, 29, starting his own business in 2003

By Sun Ming

I plan to start my own business in 2003. After a long consideration, I made up my mind to resign in September last year, because I really want to do something that I like. My friends say that I'm a risk taker.

I graduated from the China Music Institute in 1997 and my major was music education. After I graduated, I became an editor at the China Music Publishing House. The publishing house is quite famous in China. But I soon became bored.

My real interest is to do something creative. I played roles in some movies when I was a boy. Maybe that's why I'm interested in making movies and TV programs very much. I plan to borrow a digital camera to shoot the old folk artists in Beijing and life in the hutongs. I worry that the traditional culture will disappear.

Although I can't earn as much money as before, I like feeling I have challenged myself. I'm excited, I know that I will realize my dream.

Photos by Luke, Qu Liyan

ticipate in a local marathon in Beijing. But it doesn't seem to be so easy for foreign marathon fans like me to be able to register for a race due to confusing information. Anyway, I'll try to run in a marathon race when I go back to America for Christmas.

My mother and sister will come to China for their first visit this July. Xi'an or Kunming will be the possible choice that I would most like to take them around for a tour.

For the year 2003, I hope I can move around a lot and everything goes smoothly and peacefully for me to achieve my goal.

### Lü Siqing, violinist

By Lisa Lee

It's the greatest honor for me to be endowed with the precious violin loaned by the

US Stradivari Society for my life time use. I also thank *Beijing Youth Daily* for giving me a cherished chance to become its ambassador. Thanks for their trust towards me! I hope classical music can be brought into the life of ordinary people and improve the quality of their life.

Just like the symbolism of music — pursue and surpass, I will spare no effort to achieve this. Personally, although I already have my private music center, I still hope I can establish my own chamber orchestra. I've set out to prepare for this since last year. It's my greatest desire to present performance with my own chamber orchestra. I'll continue performing at home and abroad this year and strive to help people better understand classical music.

### Kathleen Naday, tour guide around China

I know that I have technically cheated by leaving before the Spring Festival started, but frankly the cold weather was getting to me. And I knew that just by stepping on a plane I could find a place that was not regularly below zero.

So here I am in Vietnam, a place where the trees are still green, and you can sit out and have a beer in the evening, or even walk around without wearing 10 layers.

It's interesting to see how much Vietnamese culture was influenced by China, from the temples, to clothes, even to the design of imperial tombs. Hue, the former capital, even has a Forbidden City, unfortunately much was destroyed during the Viet-





# All the Fun of the Fair

## Traditional Snacks

### at Longfu Temple Fair

By Lily Li

The 550-year-old Longfu Temple was the site of the largest temple fair during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Still today, as a street of traditional snacks, it is very famous among Beijingers.

The Longfu Temple Fair this year will not only maintain its traditional trading, but also add elements like modern music performances.

On January 30, from 10:30 to 11:30 am, the opening ceremony will feature traditional folk art performances like dragon, lion, and yangko dances in the plaza in front of Longfusi.

**Where:** North end of Wangfujing Street, between Dengshikou and Chaoyangmennei Dajie

**When:** 8 am to 6 pm, January 30 to February 5

**Admission:** Free

## Holy Blessing

### from Hongluo Temple

By Lily Li

The 1,000-year-old Hongluo Temple is one of the holiest Buddhist sites in China. A temple fair has been held there at Spring Festival since 1995.

There will be a variety of activities daily, including the God of Longevity offering paper-cut "blessings" at the gate; ringing the temple bells to send best wishes; writing Spring Festival couplets, guessing riddles written on lanterns; a painting and calligraphy show, and stalls selling snacks and local food.

The Cangzhou Acrobatic Troupe will also give performances daily.

**Where:** Hongluo Shan, Yanlou, Huairou

**When:** 8 am to 6 pm, February 1 to 6

**Admission:** 30 yuan

How to get there: Bus 916 from Dongzhimen to Huairou, then taxi to Hongluo Temple (10 yuan).

## International Spring Carnival

### at Chaoyang Park

By Shan Jinliang

The Chaoyang Spring Carnival will combine Chinese style festivities with highlights from overseas festive carnivals.

Visitors will find windmills and kites, bagpipe music from the Scottish highlands, and bands and dance groups from Great Britain, Germany, Brazil, Russia and Africa will add to the fun.

**Where:** Chaoyang Park

**When:** 9 am to 5 pm, February 1 to 7

**Admission:** 10 yuan

## New Folk Dancing

### at Longtan Temple Fair

By Ema Ma

Located in the southeast of Beijing, Longtan Park was recently named one of Beijing's Ten Best Parks. Although this will be the 19th Longtan Temple Fair, there is always something to surprise regular visitors.

Want to try "Beijing New Yangko" (a local version of a folk dance popular in north of China)? Here is your chance, but for one day only, on February 1.

**Where:** Longtan Park

**When:** 9 am to 4 pm, January 31 to February 7

**Admission:** 5 yuan

## Dress Up

### at Dongyue Temple Fair

By Lisa Lee

First held some 800 years ago, during the Yuan Dynasty, the Dongyue temple fair is one of the most ancient in Beijing. It was held again in 1999 for the first time in half a century.

There will be a costume exhibition, titled "A Century Exhibition of Chinese Costume and Ornament," featuring more than 300 pieces of folk costume and ornaments.

Musicians will give a recital of Dongyue Taoist music, passed down from Dongkui Fu, the former priest of Dongyue Temple.

The Wuqiao acrobatic troupe, from Wuqiao, "the hometown of acrobatics," will showcase their extraordinary skills.

**Where:** Dongdaqiao, Chaoyang

**When:** 9 am to 5 pm, January 31 to February 7

**Admission:** 10 yuan

## Literature and Culture

### at Changdian Temple Fair

By Su Wei

Though this is only the third temple fair at Changdian since it was shut down for 37 years in 1963, it has held the reputation of being the largest "literary" temple fair since the time of Emperor Jiajing of the Ming Dynasty.

There are daily performances of ballad singing, cross-talk and traditional story telling, as well as tea houses, magic and acrobatic performances and a wrestling competition.

Also traditional snacks, such as meter-long tanghulu (sticks of sugarcoated hawthorn) and douzhi (a drink made from fermented ground beans), are for sale.

**Where:** The area around Lilulichang Antique Street and Xinhua Street, from Hepingmen in the north to Hufanglu Culture Square in the south, Yanshou Street and Shanxixiang of Guang'an Street in the east to Beiliuxiang and Liangjiayuan in the west.

**When:** 9 am to 5 pm, February 1 to February 6

**Admission:** free

• **February 1 and February 5**

12 pm to 4:30 pm

Hawker Call competition

Folk artists from all over China are invited to enter the competition to imitate the lilting traditional calls of vendors of cigarettes, wine, vegetable and other goods.

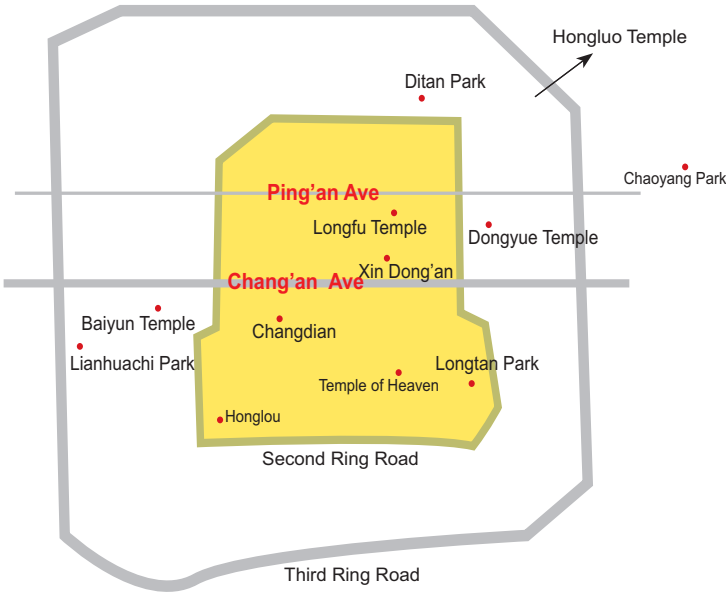
• **February 4**

12 pm to 4:30 pm

The first national competition of "Eight Consummate Skills"

The skills involved include qigong breathing exercises, wrestling, cross-talk and flagpole waving, all of which were popular activities in Beijing during the 1930s and 1940s.

Temple Fairs are traditional galas held during the Spring Festival period. They date back to around the Ming Dynasty, when itinerate acrobatic troupes, folk artists and snack vendors congregated around the temples where people went to pray for good fortune in the New Year.



Photos by Cui Jun



## Tips:

Arrive before 2 pm, as most temple fairs close at 5 pm, and things start winding down before then.

Use public transport, as the roads nearby will be very congested.

Make sure you have small change for buying snacks.

Don't forget to bargain with vendors.

Take care of your purse/wallet, especially when you are concentrating on choosing products or bargaining.

## Acrobatics

### at Lianhuachi Temple Fair

By Hou Minxin

The third Lianhuachi Temple Fair will be held in Lianhuachi Park from February 1 to February 7.

As well as traditional Chinese folk art performances and activities, such as Peking Opera, flower fairs, mask drawing and clay figurine making, the fair will also feature motorcycle acrobatics, an auto show, a craftwork exhibition, book market and counseling services.

Traditional Chinese snacks will also be on sale.

**Where:** Lianhuachi Park, Fengtai District.

**When:** 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, February 1 to February 7

**Admission:** 5 yuan

## Folk Customs

### at Ditan Temple Fair

By Chen Ying

Ditan (Temple of Earth) Temple Fair has attracted millions of visitors during the past 17 years, and is one of the largest and most popular temple fairs in Beijing.

The emperors used to hold ceremonies here to make sacrifices to the God of the Earth. A performance lasting about half an hour will recreate the ancient ceremony, daily from 1 pm.

Besides traditional Chinese games and performances, there will be a series of lectures on Chinese folk customs at Shen Ma Dian (Hall of the Divine Horse). There will also be a fashion show at Fangze Xuan and karaoke at Bai Tai (Ceremony Altar).

**Where:** Ditan Park

**When:** 9 am to 4 pm, January 30 to February 7

**Admission:** 6 yuan

## Royal Parade

### at Honglou Temple Fair

By Lisa

The focus will be on physical skills at the eighth Honglou temple fair at Daguan Yuan (Grand View Garden). There will be still walking, and a traditional dance called Di Yangge, from Shanxi Province, will be performed.

The Wu Qiao acrobatic troupe will present an acrobatic display, while three "mini iron man competitions" will be held in the yard of the Zhuijing mansion.

A grand parade Royal Concubine Yuan Paying a Visit to her Parents begins at 1:30 pm daily. Four guest performers from overseas will play the role of "concubine Yuan" (a character in the classic novel Dream Of Red Mansions).

There will also be folk toys and handicraft for sale, and of course, traditional snacks

**Where:** the Beijing Grand View Garden

**When:** 8:30 am to 5pm, February 1 to 6

**Admission:** 8 yuan

## Touch the monkey

### at Baiyun Temple Fair

By Su Wei

Baiyun Temple, the first Taoist temple in northern China, was built in 739 during the Tang Dynasty.

People no longer ride donkeys to the fair, as was common during the Qing Dynasty, but donkey rides remain a popular activity at the fair today.

The best known, and most popular, of the Baiyun Temple Fair activities are "Touching the stone monkey in the hole" and "Hitting the bell in the hole of an ancient coin."

The stone monkey, which is concealed in the gate of the temple, is no bigger than the palm of a hand. It is said that those who are able to find the monkey and touch it, will lead a happy, sound and safe life this year.

**Where:** Baiyun Temple, Baiyun Lu, Xicheng, near Xibianmen

**When:** 8 am to 5 pm, February 1 to February 6

**Admission:** 10 yuan

## Like an Emperor

### at the Temple of Heaven

By Lily Li

Visitors to the Temple of Heaven have the opportunity to pray for good luck at a reenactment of a ceremony once practiced by Qing Dynasty emperors.

The Temple of Heaven is where Chinese emperors, themselves "Sons of Heaven," went to offer sacrifices, pray for good harvests and propitiate the gods.

Students from the Beijing Dance College in Qing Dynasty costumes will dance at the Hall of Prayer; colorful banners and flags will be hung on the Danbi Bridge, traditional costumes will worn and ancient musical instruments will be played in Nan Shenchu Hall.

The performances can be seen twice a day at 10 am and 2 or 3 pm.

**Where:** Temple of Heaven Park

**When:** 8:30 am to 6:30 pm, February 1 to 6

**Admission:** 15 yuan for park ticket plus 20 yuan for the performances.

## Shopping

### at Xin Dong'an Temple Fair

By Hong Minxin

Traditional activities and arts and crafts are featured, such as miniature carving, mask drawing, clay figurines, wooden sculpture and grass plaiting.

**Where:** Xin Dong'an Plaza, Dongcheng District

**When:** 9 am to 10 pm, January 29 to February 7

**Admission:** free

## Religious Services

### during Spring Festival

At Yonghegong (Lama Temple) a Tibetan Buddhist service will be held at Falundian (Hall of the Wheel of Dharma).

**When:** 9 am-7 pm, February 1.

At Tanzhe Temple, a Buddhist service will be held at Daxiong Baodian (Shrine of Greatness and Magnificence).

**When:** 5 am - 7 pm, February 1.

**How to get there:** take subway to Pingguoyuan and then bus 931 to Tanzhesi.





# Take a Page From Our Cookbook

During Spring Festival, cooking at home is both a tradition and an almost necessity, as restaurants around town are sure to be packed. Escape the crowds and flex your own culinary muscle by whipping up the following dishes, favorites of *Beijing Today's* staff, in the comfort of your own kitchen. Bon appetite!

## West Lake Fish

(Xihu Yinxueyu 西湖银雪鱼)

By Zhang Xiaoxia

**Ingredients:** one cod filet, 500 grams; 50 grams salty egg yolk; 50 grams flour; 5 grams baking soda; 5 grams salt; 150 grams Shaoxing wine (huangjiu)

### How to make it:

1. Cut the cod into cubes. Put the fish in a bowl; marinate the cod cubes with the salt and Shaoxing wine.
2. Mix the flour and baking soda with some water; stir to form batter.
3. Dunk the fish cubes into the batter. Heat oil in a wok. Drop the fish into the hot oil and fry until golden.
4. Remove fish cubes from oil with slotted spoon. Plate. Crumble salty egg yolks over fish as a finishing touch.



## Wild Mushroom Pierogies

(Xianggu Jiaozzi 香菇饺子)

By Joel Kirkhart

**Filling ingredients:** 1 cup boiling water; 25 grams dried shiitake mushrooms; 1 medium onion, quartered; 2 garlic cloves, crushed; 180 grams fresh white or shiitake mushrooms, quartered; 1 1/2 tablespoons unsalted butter; 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley; store-bought dumpling wrappers

**Ingredients for onion topping:** 500 grams onions, chopped; 1/2 stick (1/4 cup) unsalted butter

### How to make it:

1. Make the filling. Pour boiling water over dried shiitakes in a small bowl and soak until softened, 10 to 20 minutes. Lift mushrooms out of water; squeezing excess liquid back into bowl, and rinse well to remove any grit. Pour soaking liquid through a paper-towel-lined sieve into a bowl and reserve.
2. Finely chop onion and garlic (the best results are from chopping in a food processor) then add dried and fresh mushrooms and chop all finely.
3. Heat butter in a skillet over moderate heat until foam subsides, then cook mushroom mixture, stirring frequently, until mushrooms are dry and one shade darker, about eight minutes. Add reserved soaking liquid and simmer, stirring frequently, until mixture is thick, dry, and beginning to brown, about 15 minutes (there will be about one cup filling). Stir in parsley and salt and pepper to taste. Cool completely.
4. Fill dumplings. Spoon ball of mushroom mixture into center of one dumpling wrapper. Then fold wrapper in half over filling to form half-moon shape. Wet the edges and pinch them to seal each pierogi. (Prepared pierogi can be frozen for several weeks. Just defrost before cooking)
5. Cook onions in butter in a large heavy skillet over moderately low heat, stirring frequently, until golden brown, about 30 minutes. Season with salt and pepper and keep warm.
6. Cook pierogies in a large pot of lightly salted boiling water until tender, 12 to 15 minutes. Transfer with a slotted spoon to skillet with onions. Toss gently to coat and serve immediately.

## Huaiyang Crab Ball

(Xiehuang Shizitou 蟹黄狮子头)

By Zhao Hongyi

**Ingredients:** 250 grams pork with some fat; 80 grams crab oil; 30 grams rape hearts; 40 grams water chestnuts, cleaned and diced; 250 grams spareribs; 2 grams salt; 4 milliliters cooking wine; 2 egg whites; 2 grams ginger; 2 grams chopped scallion; a dash of pepper; 4 grams starch

### How to make it:

1. Cut the pork into small cubes and then mince.
2. Add the salt, wine, scallion, ginger and water chestnut into the chopped meat. Then add two egg whites, starch and bit of water and mix. Form the mixture into four meatballs.
3. Put the spareribs, scallion, ginger and two liters of water into a ceramic pot and boil until the water has reduced by half. Carefully add the four meatballs to the soup. Stew for two hours and remove the spareribs.
4. Spoon crab meat and oil over each meatball, then cover with rape heart leaves. Stew for two more minutes. Serve immediately.



## Vinegar Pepper Fish

(Cujiayou 醋椒鱼)

By Ema Ma

**Ingredients:** whole mandarin fish, 700 grams; 1 kilogram chicken broth; 10 grams minced coriander (cilantro); 10 grams finely chopped green onions; 5 grams ginger powder; 2.5 grams pepper; 50 grams vinegar; 10 grams rice wine; 3 grams salt; 10 grams sesame oil; 50 grams cooking oil

### How to make it:

1. Remove the fish's scales, gills, fins and internal organs. Cut the flesh on the back of the fish into a cross pattern.
2. Pour the oil into a heated wok, then add pepper, onion and ginger powder; cook until fragrant. Pour in chicken broth, ginger, rice wine and salt.
3. Add fish, cook on high heat until soup is boiling. Then reduce heat and simmer for around 20 minutes. Finish by adding the chopped onion and coriander; vinegar and sesame oil.

## Golden Dumplings

(Huangjin Jiao 黄金饺)

By Ivy Zhang

**Ingredients:** 3 eggs, 250 grams chopped pork; two grams chopped green onion; 15 grams soybean sauce; 5 grams peanut oil

### How to make it:

1. Put the chopped pork in a bowl and stir in the soybean sauce, chopped green onion and a splash of water
2. Beat the eggs
3. Warm the pan and pour in the peanut oil
4. Use spoon to pour eggs into small circles on the hot pan, then put a dollop of the meat filling onto on side of each egg.
5. Fold eggs in half to make dumplings. When the bottom side of the dumpling turns golden colored, flip it and cook until other side also golden. Remove from heat.
6. Put the gold dumplings into a microwave oven for 5 minutes.

## Kung Pao Chicken

(Gongbao Jiding 宫保鸡丁)

By Sun Ming

**Ingredients:** 250 grams chicken breast; 50 grams fried peanuts; 8 grams hot peppers; 50 grams ginger, sliced; 15 grams chopped shallot; 5 grams chopped garlic, 1.5 grams vinegar; 1.5 grams sugar; 20 grams soy sauce; 1 gram salt; 10 grams cooking wine; 5 grams cornstarch mixed with 10 grams water; 100 grams vegetable oil

### How to make it:

1. Cut the chicken breast into two centimeter cubes and put them in a bowl. Add half the soy sauce, half the starch water and a pinch of salt and mix to marinate the chicken.
2. Remove the seeds from the hot peppers and then chop into two centimeter-long pieces.
3. Pour vegetable oil into a pan and heat.
4. Add the hot pepper chunks to the oil, cook for five seconds. Then add the chicken cubes and fry for around 20 seconds.
5. Make the sauce: Combine the sugar, vinegar and remaining soy sauce and starch in a bowl.
6. Add the cooking wine and fry 15 seconds. Then add the ginger slices, garlic and shallot and fry very quickly. Add the sauce and cook another five seconds.
7. Finally add the peanuts, fry another five seconds, then plate.



## Braised Pork

(Kou Rou 扣肉)

By Su Wei

**Ingredients:** 250 grams pork belly with skin; 50 grams green onions, chopped into one-inch pieces; 50 grams ginger, sliced; three pieces of aniseed; cornstarch; 20 grams soy sauce; 10 grams cooking wine; 10 grams sesame oil

### How to make it:

1. Carve the pork into a nine-centimeter square (keeping the fat and skin).
2. Put the meat into a pot along with half the onion and ginger and all the aniseed. Pour in enough water to cover. Bring to a boil and cook for one hour.
3. Remove pork and put on a plate to cool. Reserve the soup for later use.
4. Rub soy sauce into skin of pork. Add vegetable oil to pan and heat, then add pork, skin-side down, and cook one minute until skin turns gold colored. Flip pork and cook other side for around 30 seconds.
5. Pick out the pork out and set aside until cool.
6. Carve the pork, skin-side down, into five-millimeter-thick slices.
7. Put slices into a bowl skin-side down, add remaining green onions and ginger.
8. Add the cooking wine and soy sauce to the left-over soup, then pour mixture into the bowl until it covers slices.
9. Steam the bowl for around one hour.
10. Cover the bowl with a plate and pour off the soup into a clean pot. Turn the bowl upside down, leaving the pork standing in a mound skin-side up.
11. Heat the pot with the soup, mix the cornstarch with some water and then add the starch mixture to the soup to make thick sauce.
12. Add sesame oil to the pot, turn off the heat, and pour sauce over the pork. Serve.



Photo by Wang Wei



## Crab Sticks and Greens

(Xiebang xiaoyoucai 蟹棒小油菜)

By Chen Ying / Zhao Hong

**Ingredients:** 500 grams small Chinese cabbage (xiaoyoucai, 小油菜); six crab sticks; 5 grams minced shallot; 5 grams minced ginger; 3 grams salt; 10 grams sesame oil; 5 grams cornstarch mixed with 10 grams water; 20-30 grams broth

### How to make it:

1. Cut each leaf of cabbage into half lengthwise.
2. Chop each crab stick in half.
3. Pour 10 grams peanut oil into pan and heat.
4. Add the minced shallot and ginger and cook quickly.
5. Add cabbage and cook until well-done.
6. Throw crab sticks into the pan and cook, covered, for two to three minutes.
7. Add broth to pan, cover again and cook until crab sticks tender.
8. Add the starch mixture and sesame oil, stir until sauce is thick. Plate.



## Black Boned Chicken Soup

(Wuji tang 乌鸡汤)

By Shan Jinliang / Zhao Hong

**Ingredients:** one black chicken, 750 grams; 15 grams maidong, 50 grams tianma and 10 grams dangshen (Chinese medicinal ingredients available at pharmacies citywide); 20 grams dried red Chinese date; 200 grams fresh young ginger

### How to make it:

1. Wash the chicken, then add it and all other ingredients to a three liter pot and pour in two liters of water or enough to reach the top of the pot.
2. Put the pot on the stove on high heat until it boils.
3. After ten minutes, turn heat to low and simmer for three to four hours. Then add salt to taste and serve.

## Pearl Meatballs

(Zhenzhu wanzi 珍珠丸子)

By Xiao Rong

**Ingredients:** 500 grams ground pork; 300 grams sticky rice; 3 eggs; 5 grams minced ginger; 3 grams pepper; 5 grams salt; 5 grams green onions, diced

### How to make it:

1. Mince meat, but not too finely. Use a proportion of 70 percent lean meat and 30 percent fat.
2. Add eggs, ginger, pepper and salt to meat, mix and form into balls.
3. Give the meatballs the float test. Drop them into a bowl of room temperature water - meatballs that mostly stick out of the water usually taste the best.
4. Put sticky rice in bowl, add enough water to cover and soak for about 15 minutes. Squeeze rice to remove water. Roll the meatballs in the sticky rice to cover and give them a pearly look.
5. Steam the pearl meatballs for around 15 minutes over high heat. Sprinkle green onion on top and serve.





# TV Takes Over

By Yu Shanshan

The Spring Festival holidays used to feature heated competition in the entertainment market between movies and TV shows. This year, movies are out and attention is focusing on a slew of eagerly awaited TV shows.

This is partly because Feng Xiaogang has said he's had enough of directing movies specially for the Spring Festival. It's also because a number of TV series have been shot this year specially to pull in the new-year audiences.

Ten short TV programs (mostly 3 episodes) will be turning out on Beijing TV and CCTV during the coming holiday. *Jia He Wan Shi Xing: I Love My Car*, *Happy Rivals*, and *Kai Xin Jiu Hao: Happy Man Has No Trouble*, are expected to be the most successful. They each have a cast of famous comedians such as Song Dandan, Zeng Zhiwei, Zhao Benshan, and Liang Guanhua. All these shows are comedies or stories with family themes, located mostly in ordinary people's homes.

The big ratings this genre is drawing have inspired more program producers to

capitalize on the trend with new comedies and dramas. Stage comedians like Song Dandan have also found themselves a new market.

But not everyone will be laughing all the way to the bank. According to one TV expert quoted in *Beijing Youth Daily*, "This is a battle that only one show will win. One of the shows will be a huge success and remembered by the audience, while the others will disappear."

Television, being an expensive mass-market medium, is inherently conservative. And as in any conservative business, executives try to copy past successes. Besides the new version of *Jia He Wan Shi Xing*, this season offers sequels of *Kai Xin Jiu Hao*, *Jie Da Huan Xi* and *Liu Lao Gen*.

Spring Festival is not a time for pushing out newcomers but a get-together of familiar faces. What makes *Jia He Wan Shi Xing: I Love My Car* worth watching is Song Dandan, Yang Lixin and Liang Tian, who built their fame through starring in the first Chinese sitcom *I Love My Home* which was directed by Ying Da and became a hit in 1994.



(家和万事兴之我爱我车) *Jia He Wan Shi Xing: I Love My Car*

## Must-see TV

By Yu Shanshan

1. (家和万事兴之我爱我车) *Jia He Wan Shi Xing: I Love My Car*.

Starring Song Dandan, Yang Lixin, Liang Tian, Liu Jinshan.

The reunion of the cast of 1994's *I Love My Home* gives this drama a nostalgic atmosphere. Song Dandan and Yang Lixin still act as a couple, always quarrelling over trifles and this time the center of family conflict is a new car.

2. (欢喜冤家) *Happy Rivals*

Starring Song Dandan, Zeng Zhiwei, Liu Xinyi.

Director Zhu Yanping has reunited the stars of *Jia He Wan Shi Xing: My Bridegroom*. This show tells the story of a Hong Kong man (Zeng Zhiwei) finding his bride in Beijing. One big change is that Song Dandan has dyed her hair gold, changing herself from the troublesome middle-aged woman she usually plays into a modern lady.

3. (皆大欢喜) *Jie Da Huan Xi*

Starring Ning Jing, Zhang Shi, Xiu Zongdi, Wang Bing.

An email from the US from Zhuo Cheng's grandfather's brother offers hope that Zhuo's nearly bankrupt company might be saved. He invites Bo Bo (Ning Jing) and A Ming (Wang Bing) to form a temporary family, satisfying the wishes of the lonely old man to come back and live a happy life in his home. The warm human emotion weaves together a traditional Chinese family drama.

4. (开心就好之男人没烦恼) *Kai Xin Jiu Hao: Happy Man has No Trouble*

Starring Yang Lixin, Liang Guanhua, Tian Chen-gren.

In 2000 *Kai Xin Jiu Hao* with a cast including Li Yapeng, Zhou Xun, Zhu Yin (Hong Kong), Geng Le, Tao

Hong and Liu Peiqi was a breath of fresh air on CCTV. Now comes the encore. This 2003 version circles around a story of brothers in law in a Chinese medical family.

5. (最爱的是你) *You Are My Best Love*

Starring Ying Da, Yang Qing, Yue Xiuqing.

Ying Da continues his ad-exec role in this TV show following on from the 2001 movie *Da Wan (Big Shot's Funeral)*. Beijing winning the 2008 Olympics bid has brought new opportunities for guys like him.

6. (团圆两亲家) *Tuan Yuan Liang Jia Qin*

Starring Lü Liping, Liu Peiqi.

This show opens with a competition between a dumpling restaurant and a bakery, managed by Da Song (Liu Peiqi) and Fang Xinran (Lü Liping), who used to love each other but have fallen out. Will they get back together? This is the second time for Liu Peiqi and Lü Liping to play a couple, but not from the beginning as in 1999 movie *Xi Yang Jing (Shadow Magic)*.

7. (门当户对) *Well-Matched Marriage*

Starring Ma Ling, Ma Xiaoqing, Peng Yu, Liang Yin.

Ma Ling and Ma Xiaoqing are two rural girls who work in a city and finally settle down there. During their changes, there are many conflicts between their rural and urban souls.

8. (张灯结彩之好事多磨) *Happy with Lanterns and Decorations: Happy Ends After Setbacks*

Starring Li Ding, Ge Cunzhuang, He Bing, Guo Donglin.

Dr. Ma (Li Ding) perseveres in finding the lost part of a set of ancient majiang that was passed down to him. In the process, he discovers Chinese majiang culture.

By Wang Chunzhu

There's a treat in store for Beijing figure skating fans: their first sight, close up, of some of the biggest names in international figure skating. The 2003 Four Continents Figure Skating Championships will be held at Capital Gymnasium, Beijing, from February 12 to 16.

About 120 skaters from all over the world (except Europe) will take part in the Championships, including China's World Champions Shen Xue and Zhao Hongbo, and World Bronze medallists from Japan, Takeshi

Honda, and Fumie Suguri.

Both the Ladies' Free Skating and the Free Ice Dance will be held on Valentine's Day, so watching the dazzling performance of these world class athletes will be a hot choice for young couples.

The climax will be the exhibition gala by the winners on February 16.

**Where:** Capital Gymnasium **When:** February 12 to 16 **Tel:** 6406 8888 **Admission:** Preliminary contest 40-200 yuan / Final 80-280 yuan/ Gala 120-800 yuan

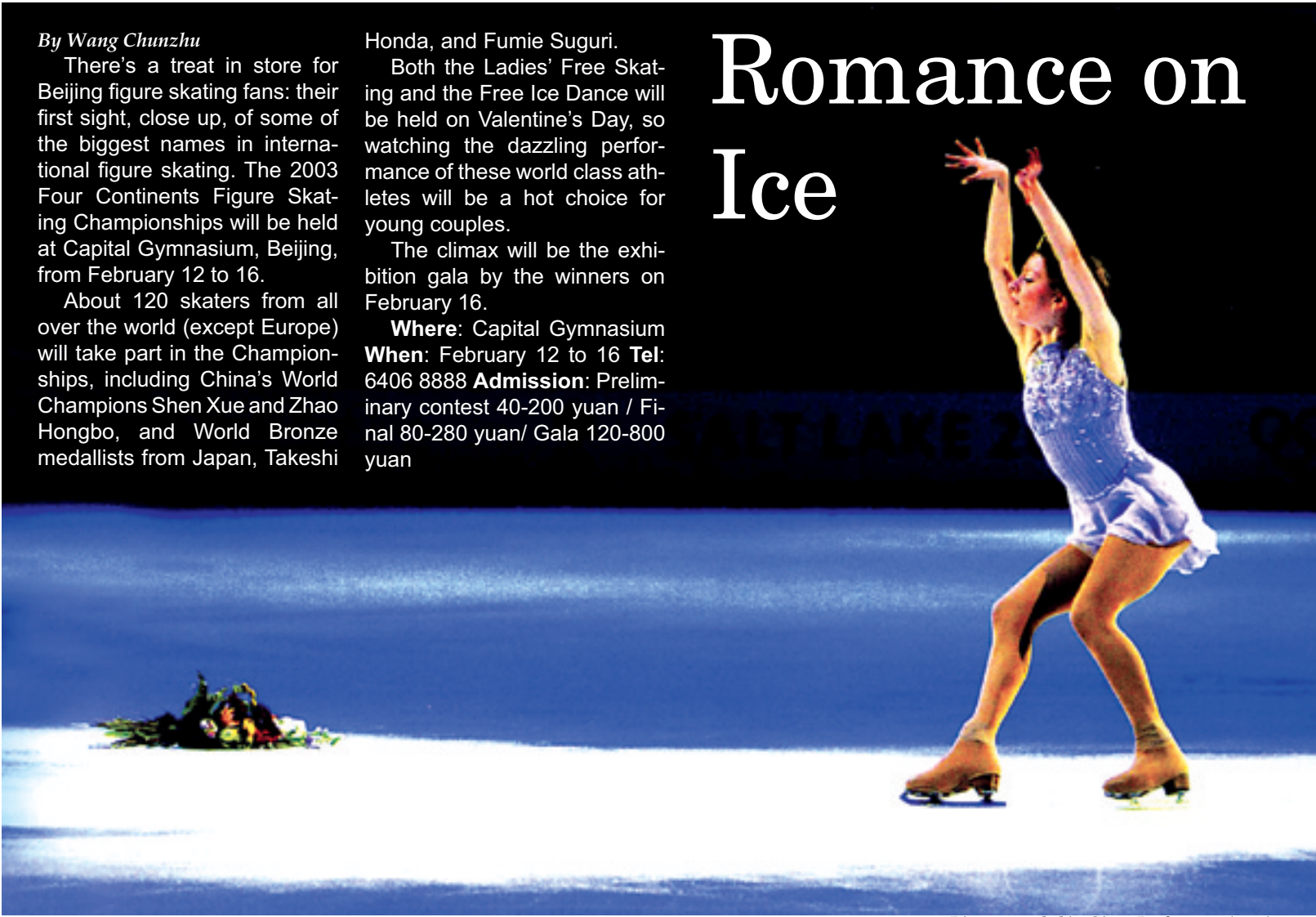


Photo provided by China Performing Arts Agency

## Dance, Dance, and More Dance

By Wang Chunzhu

A variety of dance performances are coming to the Beijing stage for the upcoming Spring Festival.

**National dance**

Twenty four years have passed since large scale national dance drama *Romance along the Silk Road* premiered at the Great Hall of the People. Starting from February 2, three performances of the prestigious play will be held at the Century Theatre by Gansu Dunhuang Arts Theatre.

Regarded as a milestone in the development of Chinese national dance, the first appearance of *Romance along the Silk Road* in 1979 shook both domestic and international dance circles.

The new production of the renowned dance drama keeps the original flavor of the Tang Dynasty.

**Where:** Century Theatre **When:** from February 2 to 4 **Tel:** 6466 0032 **Admission:** 80-800 yuan

**Classical ballet**

Poly Theatre is set to be taken over by ballet fans during the Spring Festival, with four performances by the celebrated Russian National Ballet.

In fact, the Spring Festival of 2003 in Beijing will be quite a get-together for Russian ballet dancers. In addition to Russian National Ballet, two other stellar troupes will come to Beijing. Moscow State Ballet will perform *La Traviata* at Tianqiao Theatre and soon after that, Ballet Stars of Moscow will perform *Swan Lake* at the same venue.

For Russian National Ballet: **Where:** Poly Theatre **When:** from February 2 to 5 **February 2: Nutcracker/ February 3: Swan Lake/ February 4: Sleeping Beauty/ February 5: Don Quixote** **Tel:** 6506 5345 **Admission:** 60-800 yuan

For Moscow State Ballet: **Where:** Tiaoqiao Theatre **When:** from February 2 to 3 **Tel:** 8315 6170 **Admission:** 80-600 yuan

For Ballet Stars of Moscow: **Where:** Tiaoqiao Theatre **When:** from February 5 to 6 **Tel:** 8315 6170 **Admission:** 100-800 yuan



Romance along the Silk Road

**Exotic Spanish Evenings**

Ecstasy, desolation, and much swirling of scarlet skirts. This is the flamenco-style *Carmen* by Spain's Flamenco Dance Ensemble.

This Spanish gypsy dance is performed with castanets to fast, vigorous rhythms. Flamenco combines acoustic guitar playing, singing, chanting, dancing and staccato handclapping. The flamenco dancers

perform with passion and fervor, and despite the tortured expressions they always strive for grace and dignity.

The combination of Spanish folk dance, classical opera and Spanish gypsy motifs makes for an evening of exotic romance.

**Where:** Beijing Exhibition Center Theatre **When:** from February 2 to 7 **Tel:** 6567 5049 **Admission:** 180-580 yuan

## Classic Drama Revived

By Jenny Wang

A new version of stage drama *The Teahouse* is to be performed at the Capital Theatre from February 2 to February 8.

Renowned writer Lao She gained fame both in China and worldwide with this social critique on the background of a family running a teahouse for three generations. *The Teahouse* draws attention to the circumstances of the poor. Each generation, from the late Qing dynasty to the Warlord Period to the eve of the liberation, suffers more than the generation before.

In 1999, director Lin Zhaoehua, who is famous for his creativity and innovation, successfully launched a new production of this play. The new version starred top artists of a new generation from Beijing People's Art Theatre, including Liang Guanhua, Pu Cunxin and Yang Lixin.

**Where:** Capital Theatre **When:** February 2 to 8 **Tel:** 6524 9847 **Admission:** 80-280



Pu Cunxin, Liang Guanhua and Yang Lixin (from left to right)

## Have a Suede New Year!

By Jenny Wang

One of the UK's most important and influential bands, Suede, have announced their first ever shows in China's mainland. The group will play two gigs at Beijing's Chao Yang Gymnasium on February 3 and 4, concluding their tour of Southeast Asia.

"Nineties music wouldn't have been the same without Suede," claims lead singer Brett Anderson. Hailed by the UK music press as the best British band since The Smiths, they won the prestigious Mercury music prize and have won plaudits from artists ranging from David Bowie to Derek Jarman. Ten years on from their debut, they remain one of the few British bands with truly international appeal—their most recent album *A New Morning* spawning number one hits from Peru to Singapore.

For their first show in Beijing, Suede will play songs from their new album as well as old favorites.

**Where:** Chao Yang Gymnasium **When:** February 3 and 4 **Tel:** 8842 0059 **Admission:** 280-1000 yuan







## Jimmying Open the Market

By Zhao Pu

Two years ago, China's publishing houses regarded comic books as something that only children were interested in. The comic series by famous comics author Zhu Deyong was not welcomed, with few publishing houses willing to print his works.

The success of *Subway* by cartoonist Jimmy changed their minds. It set a sales record after 60,000 volumes were sold in a month last year. Specialists immediately declared a "new comics era" had arrived. Another of Jimmy's titles, *A Chance of Sunshine*, ended last year at No. 4 in the best-sellers' list for 2002. Where Jimmy blazed a trail, others are now following.

Most of the adult comic strips deal with issues like nostalgia and dealing with harsh reality. The authors attempt to touch people's hearts with simple ideas.

One new series published by Jieli Publishing House last month revolves around a little pig called McDull. It tells the story of an optimistic pig who is determined to achieve great things despite being a bit of a dummy.

Though it aims mainly for children it has found a readership in older age groups. It's got a traditional flavor in that the motivation for the little pig's efforts is the desire to please his mother. And it's not all sweetness and light, as the mother witnesses with disappointment McDull's various reverses and failures. This family theme seems to be doing the trick in the marketplace.

The McDull comic books have already appeared in Sanlian Bookstore's weekly best-seller list. The comics are written by Hong Kong author Brian Tse and illustrated by his wife Alice Mak.

The McDull comic strip marks something of a departure from children's literature, the main purpose of which has long been considered to be educational, giving children moral lessons and presenting carefully selected universal truths. The McDull story aims not to promote doctrine but to offer inspiration. It encourages children to think instead of to follow. It is simple in form but rich in content, childlike yet profound.

Another recent comic hit is *Pearls of a Lonely Burglar*, a comic book by Qian Haiyan. The book is a collection of hundreds of the author's illustrations published in newspapers and magazines over the past four years. Rather than depicting a story, the book gathers the author's inspiring observations of life. In classic comic style, it reveals the harsh truth in a seemingly innocent context.

*Curry Pie*, an office humor comic series published half a year ago by China Social Science Publishing House is another popular choice.



## Getting into Architecture

By Iris Miao

If you are out of town next week visiting a historic city or site, this is a book that you should take with you.

*Twenty Lectures* covers the history and various other aspects of ancient Chinese architecture. From ancient dwelling sites to cities, from altars to ancestral temples, from individual buildings to architectural theories, Professor Lou Qingxi from Tsinghua University, former assistant to well-known architect Liang Sicheng, delivers a clear and comprehensive survey. Somewhat unusually for a semi-professional book, profound concepts are explained in a simple way.

Lou is also an accomplished photographer of architecture, as the more than 300 pictures and illustrations in the book show.



Illustration from Pearls of a Lonely Burglar

## Stuck in Cliché Hell

By Qiu Huadong

The publishers of Jiu Dan's latest book *Phoenix* are clearly confident. The first print run is said to be 100,000 copies. They could be in for a disappointment, however, if the buying public has any taste.

*Phoenix* is intended to resemble a romantic classic. Like Jiu Dan's previous book *Crow*, this one follows the life of a Chinese woman living overseas and the torrid love affair she becomes involved in. Something about *Crow*, which was about a Chinese student in Singapore who turned to the life of a prostitute, touched a nerve and the book sold by the cartload. Perhaps the publishers saw in Jiu Dan's documentary style of writing something that was new and fresh.

Jiu Dan is certainly distinct from other female writers, many of whom are busy pretending to be cool. But the close-up portrait of the writer on the cover of *Phoenix* offers a clue that perhaps the author is taking herself a little too seriously. Another difference with her literary rivals is that at least they have some kind of discernible style.

Jiu Dan appears to think that writing in an obviously untutored fashion will elevate her books above the status of the usual disposable fiction. She's even claimed to be at the forefront of contemporary fiction.

Unfortunately, *Phoenix* gets so bogged down in cliché that such notions start to seem slightly ridiculous. The story mines wearisomely familiar stereotypes: a woman seeking romance with an older man, the strangeness of the foreign country, there's even a castle just to add a bit of

atmosphere. The author quotes poems by Guo Moruo, and the influence of *Jane Eyre* is obvious throughout the book. Perhaps it's time for someone who clearly knows nothing about writing to start being a little more modest.



## Old but Now

By Qi Shou

Pop queen Na Ying surprised her fans with her new album *Now* released last November by Warner. The first single from it *Loving you is loving Loneliness* caused something of a stir when a 90 second clip of its music video was shown on the internet. The bold performance of the hero and heroine in the video caused it to be banned from television. In one week, the clip was viewed online by 300,000 people. The melancholy love song tells a story of two lovers chasing love and lust, and finally choosing to commit suicide together.

*Now* contains ten new songs from the love song queen. Na Ying's coarse yet soft voice illustrates the desperation of love. Next to rap and hiphop, this kind of songwriting style seems a little old-fashioned but it has the power to touch the heart in a way that a lot of today's pop music cannot.



## Silver Screen Spring Festival Highlights

By Jenny Wang

Beijingers thinking of going to the cinema in the Spring Festival will have some diverse options: *Cat and Mouse*, *Love for All Seasons*, and *Sweet Home Alabama*.

The romantic comedy *Sweet Home Alabama* tells the story of New York fashion designer Melanie Carmichael (Reese Witherspoon), who suddenly finds herself engaged to the city's most eligible bachelor. But Melanie holds many secrets, including Jake (Josh Lucas), the redneck husband she married in high school who refuses to divorce her. Determined to end their contentious relationship once and for all, Melanie sneaks back home to Alabama to confront her past. Following her role in *Legally Blonde*, Reese Witherspoon gives another funny and engaging performance.

The two other movies are typical Hong Kong comedies.

Starring silver screen idols Andy Lau and Cecilia Cheung, and multiple award winner Anthony Wong, *Cat and Mouse* is loosely based on the story of Judge Pao in the Song Dynasty and his group of heroic helpers. In the original story, Zhan Zhao (aka "the Imperial Cat") is constantly at loggerheads with Bai Yutong (aka "the Multicolored Mouse"), a Robin Hood figure who assists Judge Pao from the other side of the law.

Their conflict is given a modern rendition in this hilariously iconoclastic film, with Bai Yutong turned into a cross-dressing heroine played by Cecilia Cheung with a crush on Zhan Zhao played by Andy Lau.

*Love for All Seasons* stars Sammi Chen and Louis Koo. The setting of the modern love story is Emei Mountain of Sichuan Province, which is covered with cedars, pines and fir trees. In order to cure his disease, rich Hong Kong businessman Hong Feihu goes to seek help in the remote mountain. A series of amusing encounters occur between him and Wang Feng, the young herbalist doctor who is also a kung fu expert.

**Where:** major cinemas in Beijing  
**When:** from February 1 to 12



## Talk About Almodóvar

By Qi Shou

After a chance encounter at a theater, two men, Benigno and Marco, meet at a private clinic where Benigno works. Lydia, Marco's girlfriend and a bullfighter by profession, has been gored and is in a coma. It so happens that Benigno is also looking after a woman who is in a coma, Alicia, a young ballet student. The lives of the four characters become intertwined, dragging all of them towards an unexpected destiny.

*Talk to Her* (*Hable con ella*), has just scooped the Best Foreign Language Film award at the Golden Globes for Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar. It is a story about the friendship between two men, about loneliness and the long convalescence from wounds of passion.

Almodóvar attempts to present the joy of narration and words as a weapon against solitude, disease, death and madness, a type of madness so close to tenderness and common sense that it does not diverge from normality.

## Marital Mishaps

By Qi Shou

It was the perfect honeymoon... until it began.

*Just Married*, directed by Shawn Levy, tells the story of a happy young couple, Sarah and Tom (Brittany Murphy and Ashton Kutcher) who marry against the wishes of Sarah's friends and family and go to Italy for their honeymoon. Unfortunately for them, Sarah's parents send her ex-boyfriend Peter Prentis (played by Christian Kane) to break up the happy marriage. The perfect honeymoon in Venice is turning out to be the worst one imaginable. Can the marriage survive?

A simple romantic comedy, this is fun so long as you don't expect too much.



Poster of Cat and Mouse





Snow Route

This trip leads travelers north to enjoy the northern lights (aurora borealis), snow, ice carvings and a whole island of ice-covered trees in Heilongjiang and Jilin provinces.

First Day:

Leave for Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang Province, by train number T17 or T71. Both are overnight trains.

Second Day:

Arrive in Harbin in the morning. First visit the Grand Church of San Sophia, the biggest Eastern Orthodox Church in the Far East, and grab lunch at the city's earliest Western-style restaurant, the Huamei Russian Restaurant. In the afternoon, drop in on Central Street, Asia's longest pedestrian mall, and Sun Island (太阳岛). That evening check out the ice carvings scattered around the city.

Third and Fourth Day:

Leave Harbin for Qiqihaer and transfer from there to Mohe (漠河) by train number 507. Get off at the Gulian station, and take a bus to get to North Pole Village, around 40 kilometers away. Be warned that only three or four buses travel between the two places each day. Return to Mohe the second morning. There lucky travelers can catch a sight of the elusive northern lights.

Fifth Day:

To Harbin and then take train K479 train to Hailin (海林) station and head to Shuangfeng, (双峰) by taxi or bus. Taxi fare for the three-hour ride should come to around 160 yuan. Shuangfeng is said to receive the most snow-fall of anywhere in the country.

Sixth Day:

To Harbin and then leave for Jilin City. Jilin's ice-rimmed trees have been dubbed one of the country's four natural wonders. The unusual ice formations cover a six square-kilometers island that lies 40 kilometers away from Jilin City. The island is often blanketed in fog, which freezes overnight to form an icy covering on trees and bushes.

Seventh Day:

Take train number K272 back to Beijing.

Tip

It can get extremely cold in Mohe, with temperatures as low as -50 centigrade. Good warm boots and a heavy coat are necessities.

Sea Route

Even in February, Hainan Island has all the trappings to make tropical visions come true. Sanya city is sure to be packed throughout the holiday, so head to the Xisha Islands, 180 nautical miles away from the east port of Hainan. There should be relatively few tourists marring the fantastic scenery of these secluded tropical beauties.

First Day:

Leave for Haikou, capital city of Hainan Province, by air and then take a bus to Wenchang (文昌) home of Qinglan Port (清澜港). This is the only port that has ships that sail to the Xisha Islands. The target area is Yongxing Island (永兴岛), the largest of the Xisha chain. The white four-story liner ship "Qiongsa II" leaves Qinglan Port at 5 pm and arrives at Dongxing at 10 am.

Second Day:

Oval-shaped Dongxing Island is covered with green foliage and surrounded by white beaches. Another spot worth exploring is Shidao Island (石岛), an island made of black stones, across an 800-meter bridge from Yongxing.

Third Day:

Get up early to see the sunrise. Then hit the Ocean Museum, which has exhibits of more than 4,000 kinds of birds and sea creatures. The liner only stays at the island for two days, so visitors have to return to Hainan with the ship at 5 pm.

Tips:

1. Tourists who want to visit the Xisha Islands have to claim to be going to conduct "research," as some of the islands have People's Liberation Army bases. At least one tourism agency can arrange for "research" cover, although at steep prices.

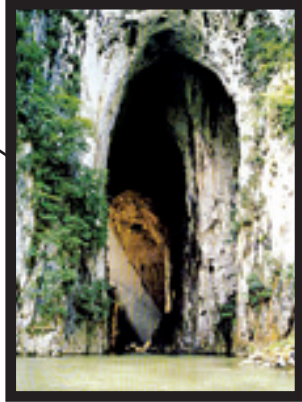
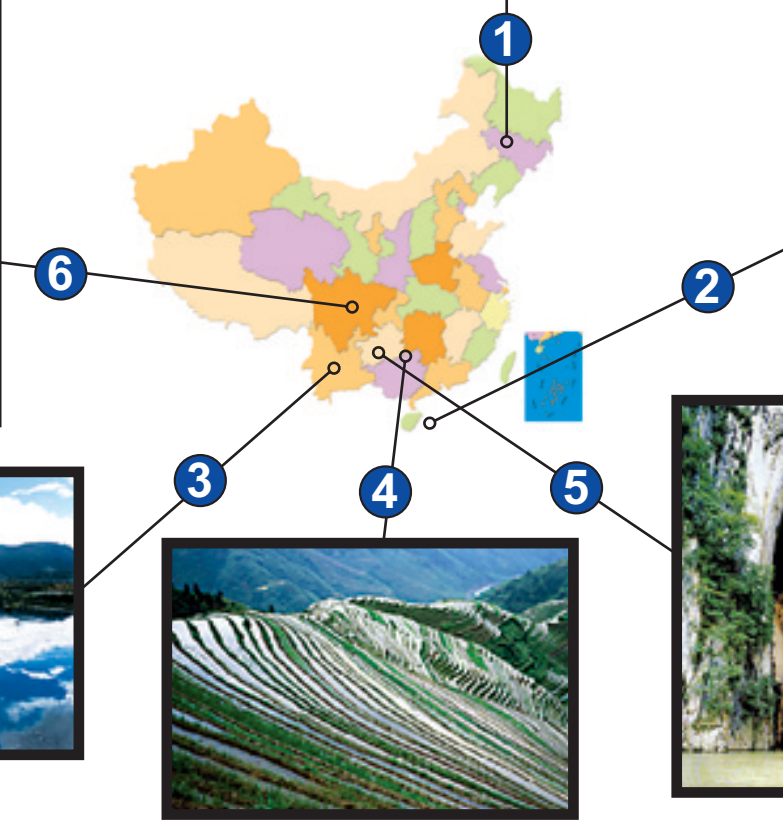
2. Bring clothes and sunscreen to avoid sunburn, as well as mosquito repellent and lots of film.



Get Out of Town

By Wenlong

The seven-day Spring Festival holiday provides a chance for travel fans to find new places to explore and have fun. Below Beijing Today has listed several travel plans that generally lead away from the beaten path and offer genuine beauty and, hopefully, peace. Some of this information was provided by the luyou, a group of dedicated hikers who have trekked these routes and many others. Their hiking plans can be strenuous, but all offer fantastic scenery and lots of fun.



3. Call 0898-5353351 for information on the liner ship.

Fourth Day:

The remaining three days can be spent on a circular tour of Hainan Island. The first destination is the Haikou - Danzhou (儋州) area on the western end of the Island. Check out this less-developed region, which includes some pristine areas and the world's largest upas tree. Stay overnight at the Nanyang Hot-spring Hotel.

Fifth Day:

Travel from Danzhou to Sanya.

Sixth Day:

Travel from Sanya to Haikou. You will pass a monkey-filled island, Lingshui (陵水), and Bo'ao (博鳌), the location of the 2001 Asia Forum. Lingshui was the site of the controversial collision of a US spy plane and Chinese fighter in 2001.

Seventh Day:

Fly back to Beijing from Haikou.

Stone Route

Lijiang in Yunnan Province has long been a favorite crash spot for backpackers, but the relaxing town has something to offer for any visitor. To avoid the crowds, try a new hiking route that leads to Baoshan Shitoucheng (宝山石头城), Fengke (奉科), Labo (拉伯), Gewa (格瓦), Yongning (永宁) and Lugu Lake (泸沽湖).

First Day:

Head out from Lijiang to Baoshan Shitoucheng, which is 120 kilometers away. The bus, which can be caught at the intersection near Heilongtan Park, does not have a fixed departure

time. However, taking this bus, which costs 35 yuan and covers the journey in eight hours, saves travelers the 120 yuan entrance fee to the mountain. The only place to spend the night is at the Mu Family Guest House. From Baoshan, visitors can take off on mountain climbs or take a boat down the Jinsha River .

Second Day:

Hike 20 kilometers north to Fengke through Taiziguan (太子关). After passing through two tunnels, you'll arrive at Liuqing Village (柳青村), a good place for lunch and a rest. The rest of the journey to Fengke is easy. Travelers can stay in villagers' homes overnight.

Third Day:

This is the toughest part of the journey. The four-kilometer hike from Fengke to Labo should take around three hours to finish. The remaining 25-kilometer leg from Labo to Gewa, is mostly at around 3,500 meters above sea level and can be quite draining. Stay at Gewa for the night.

Fourth Day:

This last leg of the journey ends in Yongning after a huge hump of 55 kilometers. From Yongning county it is a 20 minute bus ride to get to Lugu Lake. Lugu Lake, with an elevation of 2,685 meters, is located in the border of Ninglang County, Yunnan Province, home to one of the world's few remaining matriarchal societies. Boat tours of the lake take off in the morning and cost 50 yuan per person.

Travelers can stay and enjoy the sights of Lugu for two nights and return to Lijiang on the sixth day.

Sixth Day:

Return to Beijing from Lijiang airport or Kunming airport.

Tips:

1. Take a head lamp or torch/flashlight because electricity supply is unstable.

2. It a good idea to bring a mobile phone that uses the China Unicom network.

Ethnic Route

The region located between Hunan, Guizhou and Guangxi is a land of diverse wonders and people, including the Yao, Dong, Miao, and Zhuang ethnic groups.

First Day:

Leave Beijing for Guilin, and from there take a bus to Longsheng (龙胜). The bus leaves from the Guilin Bus Station every 15 minutes, and the three hour trip will cost 15 yuan.

Second and Third Day:

Longsheng, located in northeast Guangxi, 100 kilometers from Guilin, is famous for the Longji (龙脊) Terraces. After walking across a suspension bridge, tourists should run into some locals, who will offer to guide them to Ping'an Village (平安村), which features the best views of the terraces. Most Yao villagers are happy to put up tourists for a night for a small fee. Tourists can also stay in hotels in Ping'an Village for 15 yuan per night. After seeing the terraces, travelers can rent a boat to drift down the six-kilometer river the next morning.

Fourth Day:

Leave for Ziyuan (资源) County at noon by bus for 17-yuan and arrive in the evening.

Fifth Day:

Hiring a minibus or small car

for 160 yuan can get you to the nearby scenic area of Fenghuang (凤凰) by evening. Tucked away on the border of northern Guizhou, eastern Sichuan and western Hunan, this tiny region is an ideal place to immerse oneself in the ancient culture of the Miao people.

Fenghuang is home to over 200 Miao villagers. There are numerous blockhouses around that date back to the Tang Dynasty. The Great Wall of South China built in the Ming Dynasty is also worth a visit. The Tuojiang River (沱江) runs through the village, creating scenes straight out of a landscape painting. Stay in a villager's home for the night for a mere 15-20 yuan.

Tip: Dishes in restaurants in Fenghuang normally cost only around 2 yuan each, and hotel rooms should run no more than 20 yuan a night.

Sour Soup Route

First Day:

Leave Beijing at 8 pm on train T61 to Kunming and get off at the Kaili (凯里) station at midnight on the second day.

Third Day:

Take a bus to the ancient town of Xiasi (下司) and return to Kaili to spend the night.

Fourth Day:

Take an air-conditioned bus to Rongjiang (榕江) for 30 yuan per person. There visit homes of people of the Dong minority and the poetic village of Fengdengzhai (丰登寨).

Fifth Day:

Take a bus to Liping (黎平), 96 kilometers away from Rongjiang. Twenty kilometers outside of town is an amazing natural bridge. Re-

turn to Guiyang at night.

Sixth Day:

Take a bus 161 kilometers southwest to Guiyang and arrive at Getu (格凸), which has wonderful karst scenery. The area is also pock-marked with huge caves, some of which locals use as houses.

Seventh day:

Return to Guiyang and fly back to Beijing.

Tip:

Try the local cuisine, especially dishes made of dog meat and fish stewed in sour soup.

Panda Route

This route leads to the back forests of Sichuan, home to the few pandas still living in the wild.

First Day:

Leave for Chengdu by train number T7 and arrive the next evening.

Third day:

Take a train or bus to Zigong (自贡), China's ancient salt capital.

Fourth Day:

Take a bus to Yibin (宜宾) and check out the coffins hung on the cliffs along the way. Then get another bus to Wanling (万岭) County, known for its massive bamboo forest, and stay the night.

Fifth Day:

Take a bus to Xichang (西昌), southwest of Yibin, to view rock paintings and carvings. Leave for Panzhihua (攀枝花) during the night.

Sixth Day:

Panzhihua is the major city in southeastern Sichuan Province and is near the beautiful Lugu Lake.

Seventh Day: Return to Chengdu, then head back to Beijing.





## 1 The foreigner's hutong

Nowadays, nearly every foreign embassy in Beijing is packed into the Sanlitun area. Before Liberation, though, many were located on East Jiaomin Alley (东交民巷) in the southeast of the city, which still shows evidence of its former foreign influence.

Begin your tour at the east end of the alley. The first stop must be the newly-renovated, 100-year-old Catholic Church that stands by the crossroads at Taijichang Dajie. Coming out of the church, proceed to the crossroads and turn right (north) onto Taijichang Dajie. In this street you will find the well-preserved, two-story main building of the former Italian Embassy.

Keep heading north, and turn right (east) at the second T-intersection into Taijichang Toutiao. At number three, you will find the old Austrian Embassy, decorated with ornate carvings. Return to Taijichang Dajie, and head south. You will see the Yuzhang Culture and Art Center, a souvenir shop on the left just before Taijichang Dajie intersection. This shop sells some art wares rarely seen in other shops, such as protective talismans made of polymer clay.

Turn right (west) at the crossroads. You will see the former French Embassy at 15 Dongjiaominxiang (East Jiaomin Alley). This is the largest complex remaining in the alley. Most of the buildings inside and the small garden have changed little in the past hundred years. Heading on westward, you will reach an elegant building at number 19, Dongjiaominxiang, immediately recognizable as a post office. Formerly the French Post Office, the building is now the Jingyuan restaurant, an ideal place to stop for lunch.

## 2 Beyond Badaling

**Simatai**  
The Simatai Great Wall, known for its height and spectacular location, is the only part of the Great Wall that has kept its original Ming Dynasty features. It is separated into two parts by a valley, across which runs a chain bridge. Besides it, you will find Heaven Bridge. The bridge is nearly one hundred meters long, but only one meter wide. Beyond this is Wangjing Tower, which is said to be one of Beijing's highest cultural relics, at 986 meters above sea level. In the valley, there are two springs, called the Mandarin Duck Springs. The east spring is cold, and the west one hot.

Take tourist bus 12 from Dongshishitiao to Simatai, or take a bus to Miyun and hire a microbus taxi to cover the 60-70 kilometers to Simatai. Total fare should be around 60-70 yuan.

Simatai Great Wall is one of the best sections of the wall in terms of living and dining. You can stay either in small inns or local houses.

### Jinshanling

The Jinshanling Great Wall is more mountainous than Badaling, and features more delicate architectural work. The wall here really looks like a dragon. Along the 20 kilometers section are over 100 watchtowers built in various styles and numerous hidden gateways. Visitors to this long section of wall need to watch their step, as some sections are a bit crumbly.

On the Beijing-Chengde expressway, you'll see the Jinshanling Great Wall as you approach the boundary between Luanping and Miyun counties.

A tent is the best option for accommodation around this part of the wall. Take a supply of food with you, as the local restaurants, though cheap, aren't great.

### Jiankou

Jiankou, a section of the wall often shown on postcards, is in some places even steeper than Simatai. Jiankou is located 10 kilometers west of Mutianyu. The easiest way to get there is to walk up from Zhenzhuquan Village (珍珠泉村), passing Longtandaba (龙潭大坝), until you reach Jiankou and Yingfeidaoyang (鹰飞倒仰), a high

# Seeing the Sights Missing the Masses

By Huang Lisha

Most people look forward to the Spring Festival holiday as a chance to escape the hum-drum of the work week. However, many end up spending their time off at home. Below are some choices for easy tours that offer a lot of enjoyment for little effort and even less money, leaving absolutely no excuse to blow another holiday watching silly pageant shows on TV.



point. This walk has some difficult climbs, so carry as little as possible, just some water and a camera should be enough.

Temperatures tend to be around five degrees lower than in downtown Beijing. You will have to bring your own drinking water.

## 3 Hutong Hikes

The hutongs, or alleys, of Beijing have charm and beauty to appeal to history hunters and more casual strollers.

Many large courtyards can be found among the hutongs at Nanluoguxiang (南锣鼓巷, located off of Di'anmen Dongdajie). Formerly the residences of Qing officials and members of the imperial family, these courtyards have been redone, but some original features such as their stone *mendun*, have not been touched. Drum-shaped *mendun* were placed at the door to large courtyards owned by wealthy families, while square *mendun* stood before more modest homes. Nearly all *mendun* were carved with traditional auspicious symbols, such as phoenixes.

The hutongs at Dashila have come into the limelight in the past several months with the uncovering of some archeological discoveries. A well in Sanjing Hutong (三井胡同) dug in 1633 has been opened, though today it only produces bitter water. Moreover, the courtyard house at No. 7 Beihuoshan Hutong is home to the last of Beijing's wooden screen walls, which dates back to the Qing Dynasty.

Qianshi Hutong (Money Alley, 钱市胡同), one of the narrowest in the city, is easy to pass by. Getting help from a local to find the street is a good idea. The alley is 55 meters long with an average width of just 0.7 meters. At its narrowest point, 40 cen-

timeters across, people have to squeeze through one by one.

This tight little hutong used to be the official financial market of Beijing in the Qing Dynasty. It was purposely designed to be narrow with a dead end to prevent robbery. Money Alley is the oldest and best-preserved financial exchange in China.

To visit the alley, head north from the Qianmen subway station as far as the Quanjude Peking Duck Restaurant. Cross the road into Dazhalan Street until a big board marked Zhuobaoshi Street (珠宝市街) can be seen. Enter the street and look to the left (west) to find Money Alley.

## 4 Lesser-known Tombs Tour

The thirteen Ming Tombs are located in a valley ringed by hills 50 kilometers to the northwest of Beijing. Foreigners visiting Beijing generally visit the two best-known tombs, the Changling and Dingling Tombs. The other tombs, though badly damaged, are still definitely worth a look.

You can travel through the eleven tombs along three lines. The Zhaoqing and Siling tombs are on the west line, the Jingling, Yongling and Deling tombs fall on the east line, and the other six tombs lie northwest of Changling.

Located to the northwest of Zunhua (遵化), Hebei Province, and 125 kilometers east of Beijing, the Dongling Mausoleum is the largest imperial tomb group of the Qing Dynasty. Dongling is the resting place of a total of 161 imperial family members, including the Shunzhi, Kangxi, and Qianlong emperors. On weekends and holidays there are buses headed to Dongling that depart from the Xuanwu-men Church at 6:30-7 am.

The Xiling tombs, sprawling over 100 square kilometers, lie at the foot of Yongning Hill in Yi County (易县), Hebei Province. The Qing emperors Yongzheng, Jiaqing, Daoguang, and Guangxu are buried here, along with concubines, princes, and princesses. Buses leave daily for the tombs from the Lize Bridge long distance bus station, and the trip costs only 15 yuan.

The city's many famous universities can provide a nice way to spend a vacation day. There are at least four universities worth checking out: Peking (Bei Da), Tsinghua, Beijing Foreign Studies University (Bei Wai) and Beijing Institute of Technology (Li Gong Da).

## 5 Camp Out on Campus

Peking University has attractions around every corner. A tour of Yan Yuan, the west section of Bei Da's campus, can easily fill half a day. Weiming Lake is a must see. Borrowed from the Yuan Ming Yuan, the old imperial summer palace, the stone screen on the northern bank of the lake bears the calligraphy of the Qing emperor Qianlong (1711-1799). Boya Pagoda, once a water tower, can be climbed for a fine scenic view. Students from Tsinghua and Beijing University of Aeronautics & Astronautics regularly challenge Peking University students to climbing contests at the artificial wall near the north of the pagoda.

### Tsinghua University

Leaving Peking University by the south gate, go north. Turn right at the T-junction, then at the end of the road is Tsinghua. The main entrance to Tsinghua resembles a decorative archway from the Yuan Ming Yuan. Tsinghua, famous throughout China for its prestigious architecture and engineering departments, doesn't have as much to see as Bei Da. An hour ought to do it. The Qinghua Yuan section of campus is about a 10-minute walk into the university. The school's assembly hall still has its original floorboards, doorframe, door handles and even boilers. The basketball gymnasium looks like something from China's space program.

### Li Gong Da

Head for Li Gong Da after Tsinghua. Li Gong Da authorities are proud of their new multi-functional 13-story glass tower. The Jinggong Restaurant on campus offers traditional Chinese dishes. Several bars line the southern wall of Li Gong Da. They also offer food, but can prove a bit pricey.

### Bei Wai

Leave Li Gong Da, return to the junction; turn left at the west entrance to Bei Wai's campus. Chinese undergraduates inhabit the east side of campus, which is home to an Arabian-style complex that includes displays on customs and scenes of the Middle East. Another standout structure is the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Building, which won an award as one of the 10 best buildings in Beijing in the 1990s.

### Guozijian

Less well known than these four modern universities is Guozijian, an ancient imperial college near the Lama Temple. Piyong Hall, built in the Qing

emperor Qianlong's reign, stands inside the first stone archway after the main entrance. In old Beijing, Piyong Hall was as well known a landmark as the Gate of Heavenly Peace (Tian'anmen). In the teachings of Confucius, *piyong* refers to the concept of "Heaven's knowledge". Emperor Qianlong considered that such knowledge should incorporate theories about everything in the universe. Hence a round pool was dug, representing heaven, with a cubic hall in the center representing the earth.

## 6 Guildhalls and Opera houses

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, merchants and officials from all over the country built magnificent office buildings in the capital, known as the guildhall, especially in the southern part of the city.

The most renowned guildhall in Beijing today is the Huguang Guildhall near Caishikou in Xuanwu District. The opera house and rear complex of this guildhall are still intact. Traditional Beijing Opera performances are given on the old stage at Huguang Guildhall.

If it is too crowded for your liking, there is another magnificent opera house in the much quieter Pingyang Guildhall, not far away in the Qianmen area. This opera house of this hall is larger than that of Huguang Guildhall, and even more magnificent. Though poorly maintained, most of the wooden structure, and the murals, shrines and stone tablets, are undamaged.

The recently opened Da Wan Cha Opera House (near Qianmen) offers visitors a place to enjoy Beijing Opera performances, try rare tea, and get a taste of old Beijing.





衣 (yī – clothes) at the left and 羊 at the right, stands for auspicious, propitious. 吉祥 (jí xiáng) means good luck, while 慈祥 (cí xiáng) means kindness.

祥  
(xiáng)

羊  
(Yáng)

羊, no matter whether you translate it as sheep or goat, is also a word for gentleness, calm, wealth and happiness.  
In Chinese legend, 羊 stole grain from heaven and gave it to the humans on earth, similar to Prometheus, who stole fire from heaven and gave it to man. Prometheus was bound and his liver devoured by an eagle daily as punishment. 羊 received the death penalty. Grain and sheep appeared in the place where 羊 was sentenced. That is why Chinese are so grateful to 羊.  
羊, the one of the first animals to be domesticated, devotes all of its body to humans: flesh for eating, milk for drinking, and fur, skin and bones for clothing and tools.  
Lambs drink their mothers' milk on their knees. Chinese regard the gesture as one of gratitude, and use it to educate their children to be thankful for all their parents did for them.  
羊 are gentle, and regarded as weak and fragile. In the Chinese zodiac, people believe children born in 羊 years will have a hard life, which is why many couples try to avoid having babies in 羊 years. Even in the west, people use the expression "scapegoat," for someone who bears the blame of others.



Paper cuts are made by hands, not by machines. There are two types of paper cuts: those made using scissors and those made with a knife.  
With scissor cuttings, several pieces of paper – up to eight pieces – are stuck together. The motif is then cut with sharp, pointed scissors.  
Knife cuttings are made by placing several layers of paper on a soft foundation consisted of a mixture of tallow and ashes. Following a pattern, the artist cuts the motif into the paper with a sharp knife, usually held vertically. The advantage of using a knife is that considerably more paper cuts can be made in one operation than with scissor cuttings.  
Usually the outline of the figure is first drawn on the paper, but women in rural areas sometimes use paper cuts as a way of expressing their imagination, cutting the papers intuitively, without any design.  
*Beijing Today* presents on this page some typical Beijing-style paper cuts. We sincerely hope the three Chinese characters will bring fortune, happiness and beauty into your life.  
You can cut these pieces out and paste them wherever you want, or frame them and hang them on the walls of your home or office.

Paper cuts are mostly used to ornament walls, windows, doors, columns, mirrors, lamps and lanterns, particularly during festivals and holidays.  
It is considered very important to put paper-cuttings at the entrance gates, as they bring good luck for the family. For instance, you should stick the Chinese character 福 (fú — fortune), on the wall, upside down, because in Chinese, you will say, “福到啦 (fú dào la!),” which means “Here comes fortune!” Dao is a homonym for “upside down.”  
The Spring Festival, usually in January or February, is often accompanied by snow. When you sit inside the house, red paper cuts stuck to the window are eye-catching with the white snow and strong sunshine as the background.  
On the fifteenth evening of the first lunar month, people, particularly children, will light lanterns to mark the end of the festival. Paper cuttings are an important part of the lanterns, usually lit with candles. These paper-cuts also serve as presents or as decorations on gifts. Many people appreciate them as an art, or at least a craft.

The practice of paper cutting is believed to have appeared soon after the invention of paper in the Han Dynasty, over 2,000 years ago, though archaeological finds trace the earliest paper cuts to the 6th century.  
The earliest paper was thick and strong. It was not much good for writing on, but had many other uses, such as making clothes, blankets, shoes and even armor.  
It is believed that paper cuttings were originally used for religious purposes. It can still be found put to such use in many places around the world, though not in China.  
In 6th century China, paper cutting developed into an art practiced by women from upper class families during their leisure time. In the countryside, young girls had to master skills in their childhood, by which they would be judged by their future husbands. Professional paper cutting artists, on the other hand, were almost always men who had a guaranteed income.  
Later, paper cuts came to be used as patterns, especially for embroidery and lacquer work on clothes, shoes, and even paintings and sculpture.  
Today, paper cuttings can themselves be used as presents and decorations on gifts.  
Folktale figures, auspicious Chinese characters, flowers and birds, and Chinese zodiac animals are the major subjects of paper cuts throughout history, but almost any subject imaginable can be depicted in paper cuts.



美  
(měi)

羊 at the top and 大 (dà – big), at the bottom, means beautiful, pretty, good and satisfied. 美丽 (měi lì), means beautiful, charming, 美好 (měi hǎo) means happy and glorious, 美滋滋 (měi zī zī), means pleased and satisfied, while 赞美 (zàn měi), means praise and eulogize.

翔  
(xiáng)

羊 on the left and 羽 (yǔ – feather, plume), on the right, stands for gliding through the air. 翱翔 (áo xiáng), means flying freely in space, hovering, soaring, while 翔实 (xiáng shí), means full and accurate information and evidence.

